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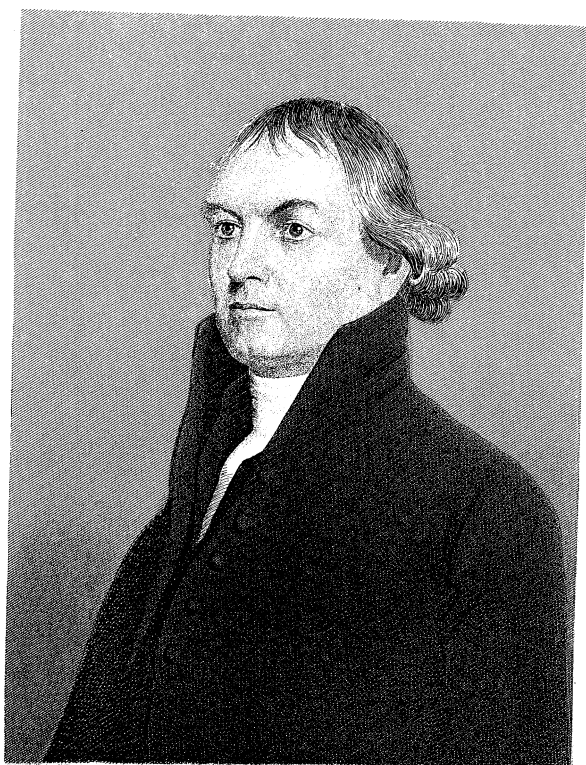
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REV. WILLIAM W. WENDREE.

Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

LIFE AND TIMES
OF
WILLIAM M'KENDREE,

BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BY ROBERT PAINE, D.D.,
BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
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TO THE
METHODISTS IN AMERICA,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

The Author.

INTRODUCTION.

THE General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at its session in Columbus, Georgia, May, 1854, requested Bishop Paine to write the biography of Bishop McKendree. The Conference was happy in its selection of a biographer of the venerable Bishop. Dr. Paine was for many years intimately associated with Bishop McKendree: he traveled thousands of miles with him; frequently heard him preach; assisted him in the preparation of his addresses to the General and Annual Conferences, and other important papers; he was familiar with all his views of the constitution and polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and gave them his cordial indorsement; he was, though comparatively young, the particular, confidential friend of the Bishop, and entertained for him the most devoted affection and veneration; and he still cherishes for his memory, as a son in the gospel, the most profound regard. He was thus eminently qualified to write his biography.

Bishop Paine was a member of every General Conference from 1824 to 1844, at which session the Church was provisionally divided. He was consequently acquainted

with the leading men of the Church who were associated with Bishop McKendree, and whose characters are appropriately and impartially sketched in these volumes. In this work, indeed, will be found a history of the Methodist Episcopal Church down to the time of the death of Bishop McKendree, as he was identified with its principal movements from the beginning.

Bishop Paine has wisely allowed Bishop McKendree to be, to a very great extent, his own biographer—having made great use of his Diary, Journals, and other MSS. These extracts exhibit the devotion and zeal of Bishop McKendree and his associates—the work is thus of immense value to their successors in the ministry, who, it is hoped, by its perusal, will be stimulated to reproduce the self-sacrificing spirit and labors of those holy men.

THOS. O. SUMMERS.

Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 1, 1869.

P R E F A C E .

BISHOP MCKENDREE was the first native American Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He served it long, faithfully, and efficiently. His ministerial life began with the early history of the Church, extended through the period of its greatest trials, and closed after its perfect development as a great ecclesiastical organization. The time when he ceased "at once to work and live," was marked by unusual prosperity and peace in our Communion. While Bishop Asbury was preëminent in founding and spreading Methodism in America, to Bishop McKendree may be justly awarded the distinction of carrying forward the work, and securing its permanency and success by his remarkable legislative and administrative abilities. He combined in a high degree the prescience and strong common sense required in a legislator, and evinced also the highest ecclesiastical statesmanship in his administrative acts; and then his unshrinking submission to all the sacrifices and labors which the system of government exacted of him, and his profound and uniform piety, gave great moral force to the cause which he adorned and beautified by his life and labors. He loved the Church—the whole Church. He lived and labored for it, and for nothing else; and his name and character is the common heritage of Methodism, especially of American Methodism.

It is from this stand-point the author has attempted to

write his "Life and Times." He was painfully aware of the difficulties of his task, and as he has not been able fully to satisfy himself, he cannot hope to satisfy all others. He has, however, endeavored honestly and impartially to do his duty to all concerned. He trusts that this attempt to perpetuate the memory and the influence of a great and good man, and of his co-laborers, may contribute to a more perfect history of our fathers, and promote zeal and primitive Methodist devotion in the ministry and membership of the Church.

Bishop McKendree has been dead thirty-four years. His biography ought to have been published long since. At his death he bequeathed "all his papers of every description to Bishop Soule, to be used at his discretion, under the advice of the Rev. T. L. Douglass;" but neither of them wrote a line as his biographer.

At the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1854, Bishop Soule called attention to this subject, and stated that, owing to his afflictions and the want of leisure, he had not been able to write the biography of his venerated and departed friend, and despaired of ever being able to do so; and thinking it ought to be done, he desired to turn over the task to another. At the concurrent request of the Bishop and the General Conference, the writer reluctantly consented to undertake the work.

Nearly the whole of the first volume was ready for the press in 1859, but its publication has been delayed by various circumstances to the present time. The second volume is in press, and will soon be published—thus concluding the "Life and Times of William McKendree."

The work is sent forth with an earnest wish that it may contribute to the glory of God and the cause of pure religion.

Aberdeen, Miss., July 28, 1869.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Birth—Parentage—Occupation—Residence—Character of the family: their circumstances—Father—Mother—Their children—William—Lucinda—Dorotha—Frances: her marriage by Bishop Asbury: character and death—John—Thomas—James—Nancy D.: like the Bishop—Family love.....	17
---	----

CHAPTER II.

McKendree becomes a soldier and an officer in the army of the Revolution—At Yorktown—Early life—Education—Intellectual character—His early moral and religious character—The Church and clergy.—His account of himself—Joins the Methodists—Is discouraged, and retires—Convictions renewed under John Easter—Conversion—Temptation—Revival under Easter—Opposition to it—Easter's manner—Success—Other eminently useful preachers of that day: Garrettson, Ellis, Watters, Hull, Cooper, Moore, Richard Whatcoat, Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce.....	25
---	----

(9)

CHAPTER III.

Letter from W. McKendree to Bishop Asbury, in 1803—His conversion—Entrance on the ministry—Joins the Virginia Conference—Misled by Mr. O'Kelly—Returns to the work 43

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. McKendree joins the Virginia Conference, 1787—Appointed to Mecklenburg Circuit—Burchett, Massie, Valentine Cook, and John McGee admitted the same time—Numbers in Society—Conference of 1789—Cumberland Circuit—Conference of 1790—Ordained deacon—The Council a failure—Appointed to Portsmouth Circuit—Rev. D. Jarratt—Extracts from Diary..... 67

CHAPTER V.

Extracts from his Diary—Preaches two hours—Vessels in a gale—Feels like a wanderer—Conversions—Preaches in the open air—In Portsmouth and Norfolk—Bands—Very busy—Children's class—Duty to baptized children—Self-dedication—Emancipation—Is changed to another circuit—"Power"—Good-breeding—New circuit—His course of life..... 90

CHAPTER VI.

McKendree's Diary—Fasting—Reproof—Mr. O'Kelly attacks the Council—His course—Itinerancy—Tobacco—Prepara-

tion for preaching—Selecting and changing texts—Different kinds of style—The kind for the pulpit—O'Kelly's Convention—The regular Council—Mr. Asbury gives it up—McKendree visits his father—Meets Bishop Asbury—Is delighted—Mr. Wesley's death—Dr. Coke goes to England—McKendree ordained elder Dec. 25, 1791..... 109

CHAPTER VII.

McKendree appointed to Greenville Circuit in 1791—General Conference, 1792—O'Kelly withdraws and dies—McKendree declines the work, but soon resumes it—Asbury appoints him to Norfolk—Conference in Petersburg in 1773—Travels three months with Asbury—Union Circuit—Philip Bruce, Presiding Elder—Tobias Gibson, his colleague—Conference in 1794 at Mabry's—John Kobler—Conference, 1795—Is made Presiding Elder—Continued three years—1798 he presides in the bounds of Baltimore Conference—In 1800 Bishop Asbury takes him to the West—Large District—Difficulties—Labors—Usefulness—1801 travels through the wilderness with Asbury—In 1804, General Conference—Jerks—Dancing—Shaking Quakers—Seceders from Presbyterian Church—Marshallites—Stoneites—McKendree chief conservator of Methodism in the West..... 135

CHAPTER VIII.

McKendree presides at the Western Conference, 1804—Bishop Whatecoat's death, 1806—McKendree in Illinois and Missouri—Review of the work in the West—Delegated

General Conference needed—A Bishop wanted—New York plan to elect one—Defeated by Virginia Conference—General Conference, 1808—McKendree made Bishop—His qualifications—Dr. Coke's letter.....	169
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

1808 an era in Methodism—Bishop McKendree's first tour and first Conference at Liberty Hill—Action on slavery—The South Carolina Conference—First missions to slaves—Two Virginia Conferences—Philadelphia and New York Conferences—Steam-boat excitement—New England Conference—Camp-meetings at Pike Run, Zanesville, and Collins's Camp-grounds—Western Conference at Cincinnati, September 30, 1809—Extracts from his Journal—Methodists taxed for the benefit of Congregationalists in Connecticut—His presidency—Dr. Coke—His overture to Bishop White in 1791 explained and vindicated—His proposal to divide the work with Bishop Asbury—His death and character.....	205
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

Bishops McKendree and Asbury go from Cincinnati to South Carolina Conference—Thence to Virginia Conference—To Baltimore—Easton, Pennsylvania—New York—New England—Genesee Conference—Camp-meeting Conferences—Through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee—Bishops Asbury and McKendree go on horseback to South Carolina—Winter tour—Letter from Bishop Morris—Method—Mrs.	
--	--

Mabry's letter—Attends various Conferences—Letter to Bishop Asbury about stationing the preachers—General Conference of 1812—Presiding-elder question—No Bishop elected—Earthquake—War—Letters..... 247

CHAPTER XI.

Difficulties and comforts—New York Conference—New England Conference changed on account of war—Tendency of selling pews—Genesee Conference—Ohio—Steubenville—Tennessee Conference—Cannot attend Louisiana Conference—T. L. Douglass—Bishops Asbury and McKendree on slavery—Blackman's position on the subject—He goes as chaplain to volunteers at the call of General Jackson—Wm. Burke's letter—South Carolina and Virginia Conferences—"Official decisions"—Buxton—New York Conference—Bishop Asbury's opinion of Bishop McKendree's sermon—Joshua Marsden in United States—He applies for employment—Resigns it—Why?—Bishop Asbury's condition—His Will—Why he expected to live long—Painful round of Conferences in 1814—Bishop McKendree's fall—Wounding hip and ribs—Tennessee Conference held at camp-meeting in Logan county, Kentucky—Neither of the Bishops can be at the Mississippi Conference—Genesee Conference—Tornado—Gets to Cincinnati—South Carolina—Virginia—Maryland—Pennsylvania—Asbury preaches—Found Dr. Coke at Albany, New York—Ohio Conference at Mechanicsburg—"Long, earnest talk"—Bishop Asbury crosses Alleghany sixty-two times—Both Bishops attend the Tennessee Conference—Separated never to meet again on earth—McKendree at South Carolina Conference—Asbury within thirty miles—

Very feeble—Hammet's people return—Virginia Conference at Raleigh—Bishop McKendree's father dies—Baltimore Conference—Bishop Asbury absent, and preaches his last sermon in Richmond, Virginia—His death—Bond's letters inclosing Asbury's views and last letter to McKendree—His person and character..... 283

CHAPTER XII.

Bishop Asbury's Valedictory—His Birth—Death—Burial—Remains removed to Baltimore..... 310

CHAPTER XIII.

General Conference of 1816—Bishop McKendree's address—George and Roberts elected Bishops—Sketches of them—Bishop McKendree's Journal—The work divided—New York and Kentucky Conferences—Bishop McKendree organizes the Missouri Conference—McKendree and George at South Carolina Conference—Changes made by General Conference—From Middlebury to Tennessee—Norton rejoins him—To Mississippi Conference on horseback—McMahon and wife with him—Mississippi Conference at Midway, 1817—To South Carolina Conference—Griffin with him—Difficulties of traveling—Crossing the Chatahooche—General Gaines—Indian murders—In Sparta—Myers—Conference in Augusta, Georgia—Roberts arrives—They go to Virginia Conference in Norfolk—Dr. Phœbus—Travels alone, and leads a pack-horse—In Tennessee—Visits South-west extensively—Ohio Conference of 1818—Missouri—Troubles at Tennessee Conference—Writer's

first acquaintance with him—Starts to Mississippi Conference with Seaton and Edge—The shock—Very much affected—Mississippi Conference—Back to Tennessee—Bishop Roberts's letters—Notes on preachers' qualifications—Dr. Emory—Letters between them—Their subsequent intercourse..... 346

CHAPTER XIV.

General Conference of 1820—Address of Bishop McKendree—Authorized to travel at his discretion—A Bishop to be elected—J. Soule elected—Presiding-elder question—Positions of the Bishops—"Compromise" or "peace measure"—Soule desires leave to decline—McKendree's statement—Facts—Powers of General and Annual Conferences and Bishops—Soule's letter—Bishops confer—Prepare to ordain Soule—The resolutions suspended—Bishop McKendree's appeal to the Annual Conferences—Precedent for it—Soule declines—His reasons—The other Bishops to do the work next four years—Bishop McKendree troubled, but resolves to do what he can—Gets to Tennessee Conference..... 396

CHAPTER XV.

Bishop McKendree's appeal to the Annual Conferences as to the suspended resolutions—The Southern and Western Conferences consent—Five others reject it—It fails—By whom, and why—Wesleyan Repository—Mutual Rights—Methodist Protestant Church—Journal resumed—Henry

Smith's narrative—Visits extensively—Preaches at camp-meeting—He goes South—South Carolina Conference—J. Soule's letters—Dr. Capers's letter—His character and influence—His second letter—The era of missions—Cherokee and Choctaw—Missions to slaves—Bible and Sunday-school Societies.....	443
---	-----

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

BISHOP M'KENDREE.

CHAPTER I.

Birth — Parentage — Occupation — Residence — Character of the family: their circumstances — Father — Mother — Their children — William — Lucinda — Dorothea — Frances: her marriage by Bishop Asbury: character and death — John — Thomas — James — Nancy D.: like the Bishop — Family love.

WILLIAM McKENDREE was born in King William county, Virginia, about forty miles north-east of Richmond, July 6, 1757. His parents, John and Mary McKendree, were both natives of the same State. His father was a planter, and William was brought up in the same occupation. He was not only taught the art of husbandry, but was also trained in early life to habits of industry and frugality.

Our history of the McKendree family begins with the birth of William, the eldest child, while residing in King William county; but before he was

seven years of age, they removed to James City county, about sixty miles south-east of Richmond, and near Williamsburg, the well-known seat of William and Mary College. A few years afterward, they again changed their place of residence, and settled in Greenville county, upon Meherrin River, and near the southern boundary of the State. Here they remained for many years. Their pecuniary condition was not such as, in Virginia, would be called wealthy; although, from incidental allusions found in the Bishop's Diary, as well as from other reliable sources of information, they were doubtless in comfortable and independent circumstances. They were a plain, industrious, and moral family, without pretensions to fame or extraordinary talents; yet, even in the "Old Dominion," holding a reputable position for intelligence, integrity, and honorable estimation.

John McKendree, the father of the Bishop, seems to have been in every respect a most worthy and exemplary man. To make provision for the wants of his large family, and to guide them by precept and example to honor, usefulness, and piety, were the great objects of his efforts. With strong domestic affections, and without any desire for notoriety, he led an humble, industrious, and religious life. In 1810, he removed from Virginia to Sumner county, Tennessee, in company with his son, Dr. James McKendree, his son-in-law, Mr. Charles Harris, with their families, and his two unmarried daughters. In October, 1815, this venerable and excellent man gently breathed his last, leaving a

dying testimony to the truth and power of religion corresponding with his exemplary life. He died on his eighty-eighth birthday. The patriarch was buried near the residence of his son James, in Sumner county, Tennessee, in a retired and beautiful rural locality, and beneath the wide-spread branches of a cluster of venerable forest trees. It is said that the Bishop was often heard to express a wish, should he die near there, to be buried by the side of his venerated father; and as he did die at the very place, he was interred there, and his mortal part still reposes in that consecrated spot.

Mary, the mother of Bishop McKendree, was a great sufferer. About the year 1769, she became so prostrated by severe affliction that she was ever afterward confined to her room, and generally to her bed. Her health, however, gradually improved, so that she was able to oversee her domestic affairs, devolving upon her daughters the more active duties of the household. But, although an invalid, and confined to her room for twenty years, her example of patience, her tact in planning and directing her domestic duties, and her kind and Christian manners, were of inestimable value to her family. Such sweetness of temper, so many sensible lessons upon the proprieties of life, and such a consistent exemplification of the purity and power of religion as she exhibited throughout these long years of affliction, made an ineffaceable impression upon her children; and doubtless that impression was stronger from the fact that these lovely traits were seen in a fond and *suffering mother*. But this

deeply afflicted lady, having been mercifully spared to train her young family for twenty years after she became a hopeless invalid, was at last permitted to rest from her sorrows, and to die in the triumphs of Christian faith. Her death occurred in 1789.

The memory of his patient, tender, bed-ridden, and yet resigned and happy mother, lingered in the heart of her devoted son to his latest hour, and always associated with the name of mother all that is pure and lovely in humanity sanctified by Christianity.

The children of this family were—

1. William, the subject of this biography.
2. Lucinda, who married Jesse Jordan, and died in Virginia, about 1778, leaving an only child. This child was a daughter, who upon the death of her mother, was taken into her grandfather's family, and treated as his own child.
3. Dorotha, married to Mr. Charles Harris, in 1797, and who with her husband followed the fortunes of the family to the West. She had four children, and died in Alabama, in her seventy-fourth year.
4. Frances, born June 22, 1763; converted in July, 1778; was married to the Rev. Nathanael Moore, October 12, 1815; and died near Columbia, Tennessee, January 3, 1835. Bishops Asbury and McKendree were both present at her marriage, having called to spend a few days with the family while making a tour of the Western Conferences. The following characteristic notice of the event is found in Bishop Asbury's Journal, in October, 1815:

"Tuesday, 10.—At James McKendree's: Nathanael Moore has come to take away our Sister Frances McKendree. All parties are pleased. . . . On Thursday, I officiated at the marriage of Nathanael Moore and Frances McKendree. We believe it is of the Lord. They are a worthy couple, and nearly of an age."

The marriage-license of these persons is found among Bishop McKendree's papers, signed by David Shelby, Clerk, and certified by Bishop Asbury, as solemnized by him, October 12, 1815.

Bishop McKendree exceeded all men I have ever known for keeping all papers that fell into his hands. Why this was not filed in the clerk's office, I cannot conjecture. Perhaps it was forgotten.

From a personal acquaintance with this estimable and pious lady, the writer formed the opinion that, as to intellect and sensibilities, she very much resembled her brother, the Bishop. A week spent at her house, in 1824, in company with Bishop McKendree, afforded the opportunity of witnessing her piety and patience under affliction, as well as her attachment to her almost idolized brother. And from an extended obituary notice of her, prepared by the Rev. Thomas Logan Douglass, and inserted in the Methodist Magazine for 1826, this history of the McKendree family has been principally derived. The materials of this history are understood to have been furnished by the Bishop himself.

Her death was a remarkably calm and happy one. Her beloved and honored brother was permitted to

be with her for many days during her long and painful decline, and was with her at her death. And who that has ever heard his soft and sweetly musical voice at the bed of a dying Christian, but can appreciate the privilege of having such a counselor at such a crisis? Nor is it strange that so conscientious and devoted a Christian, consoled and instructed by one so dear to her, and so eminently capable of soothing and strengthening her, should have been found composed and triumphant when the solemn hour of her exit arrived. Such was her end. She had no child.

5. John was the fifth child. He removed to South Carolina, and died in the city of Charleston, November 28, 1817, aged fifty-three years. His wife preceded him to the grave about six months. They left four children—Thomas, William, John Dudley, and Lemuel Joseph.

6. Thomas: he also went to South Carolina, and died in that State, October, 1817, on Cooper River. He left two children, John James and Caroline.

7. James, the seventh child, married in 1792, always lived in the vicinity of his parents, and brought up a large and respectable family. His house was the Bishop's home, if he can be said to have had a home, who spent his whole time as an itinerant. At his house their father died; there the Bishop closed his eventful and useful life; and there, in a few years afterward, James and Frances were interred by his side, to await "the resurrection of the just."

8. The eighth and last child was Nancy D. In

many respects she greatly resembled her eldest brother. In mind, heart, and manners, she seemed to be his counterpart. Like a ministering angel, she devoted herself to the welfare of others. She watched over and soothed her father during the long period of his decrepit old age, attended her sister Frances in her protracted sufferings, and was the constant and favorite nurse of the Bishop in his last years, and particularly in his final illness. Indeed, her father, Frances, and William, *literally* died in her arms.

The Bishop may not have been aware of the fact, but she was evidently his favorite. He had too much sense and too large a heart to exclude any one of those who held the same relation to him from his warm and fraternal love; but could he help loving Nancy more than the rest? She loved him as only a pure-hearted, orphan sister can love a noble and fond brother. Toward the latter part of their lives, they had little else of earthly objects to love. There was a sameness of condition—for, like him, she never married—a congeniality of taste, temperament, and mind, which strongly knit them together. She sympathized with him in his anxieties about the Church, as well as in his other mental and bodily afflictions, entered with liveliest interest into his feelings of entire consecration to the one high and holy end of his life, and doubtless felt, more than any one else could feel, a sisterly pride in his position, his worth, and his usefulness. They were, truly, kindred spirits.

Having lost all her nearest relations, she too

passed away, in 1838, to reunite, doubtless, with her precious brother, and to join the "great multitude whom no man can number." She was buried at the head of the Bishop's grave. Pleasant in life, in death they are not divided.

A peculiarity which marked the McKendree family, and displayed itself on many occasions, must have been cherished while the children were all around the domestic hearth. The allusion is to their *very strong family love*. In the course of this biography, we shall find abundant evidence of the strength of this principle in several members of this amiable and pious family — especially in William, Frances, and Nancy. And who can estimate the importance of this principle? Without it, society loses one of its surest guaranties, and religion one of its most potent class of motives.

It is the great principle of moral gravitation, binding society together, giving bliss and sanctity to our homes, and preserving order and harmony in the body politic. It cultivates the noblest instincts of our nature, opens new and pure fountains of enjoyment, restrains our impetuous and dangerous passions, and, regulated by enlightened and earnest piety, almost restores to earth again the long-lost pleasures of paradise.

CHAPTER II.

McKendree becomes a soldier and an officer in the army of the Revolution—At Yorktown—Early life—Education—Intellectual character—His early moral and religious character—The Church and clergy—His account of himself—Joins the Methodists—Is discouraged, and retires—Convictions renewed under John Easter—Conversion—Temptation—Revival under Easter—Opposition to it—Easter's manner—Success—Other eminently useful preachers of that day: Garrettson, Ellis, Waters, Hull, Cooper, Moore, Richard Whatcoat, Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce.

MR. MCKENDREE was about twenty years old when the memorable struggle of our Revolution began; and although from his extreme modesty he very rarely alluded to the fact in the latter part of his life, yet there can be no doubt that he took a decided part in that eventful and glorious war which resulted in our independence. Rumor had connected his name with Bruce and other early Methodist preachers as having been engaged in the Revolutionary War on the side of his country, but until his death called before the public the evidence of the fact, the part he had borne was generally unknown, except among his old acquaintances. In the *Western Methodist* of 1835, a long and well-written obituary of Bishop McKendree appeared, in which it was said of him: "He was an adjutant

in the levies of his native State during the latter part of the Revolutionary War, and was in the commissary department, and showed his accustomed energy of character in making impressments of cattle and food to sustain the allied armies of Washington and Rochambeau at the siege of Cornwallis at Yorktown." The Rev. Henry Smith, in his "Recollections of an Old Itinerant," p. 59, says of the Bishop: "He had been in the Revolutionary War, and was at the battle of Yorktown when Cornwallis was taken. In 1820, I passed with him over the ground, *and he showed me where his camp was.*" And the same author, in a letter to the writer, dated Baltimore county, Maryland, Feb. 6, 1855, says upon this point: "From what Bishop McKendree told me, he belonged to a company of volunteers raised, I presume, in his own immediate neighborhood. They were present at the siege of Yorktown: he pointed out to me the place where they were encamped when, in October, 1820, I traveled with him over the ground. He spoke of exercising their horses when they expected to be called into action, etc." The fact is also stated in the sketch of Bishop McKendree given by Dr. McClintock, p. 69, and also the "Life of McKendree," written by Benjamin St. James Fry, p. 14, who says: "When the war of the Revolution was commenced, and the call went forth for volunteers, as might readily be expected, he was found among those who took up arms in the cause of liberty. The extent of his service in the army is not known, but it is certain that he attained to the rank of adjutant, and was for a

time at least connected with the commissary department." He continued with the army for some years; indeed, the war virtually closed with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis on Oct. 19, 1781, although a general peace was not proclaimed until April 19, 1783.

The writer was for many years as familiar with Bishop McKendree as any one could be who was so much his junior. He was his traveling companion and amanuensis for several months at a time; passed with him by short stages through Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia, over several battle-fields of the Revolution; visiting the vicinity of Mount Vernon; talking with him occasionally about his recollections of Washington, and the war of independence; sitting with him in Washington's family pew, which had the initials of his name still upon its door; but in all these long and solitary rides, and these familiar conversations upon kindred topics, he never heard him allude to his own services in the Revolution. Perhaps he was afraid of appearing vain of his reputation as an officer in the noble struggle for national independence, and wished to set an example of modesty and humility. In him the soldier of civil liberty was merged in the nobler character of a true and valiant soldier of the cross. Having done his duty to his country in the capacity of a patriot soldier, he was contented, and never boasted of his feats, *nor sought a pension for his services*. Worldly honors and riches were far below his aim.

Bishop McKendree's early life seems not to have

been distinguished by any very remarkable incidents. He grew to manhood at a period in our colonial history unfavorable to mental culture. There were very few schools then in Virginia competent to give a good English education, while only three or four colleges had been founded in America, and only one in his native State.

His education, therefore, was such as the country schools afforded—perhaps neither better nor worse than was usual with those who, like himself, belonged to the middle class of society. That he was not a classical scholar, nor, when he entered the ministry, a good English scholar, we have no wish to conceal; but he had a fair rudimentary education—had taught school—had a quick apprehension, a sound and discriminating mind, and such a refined taste as gave great accuracy to his selection and use of words. Combined with these qualities was his ardent desire for knowledge, and his tenacity of purpose in the pursuit of it; and then, after he had taken upon himself the vows of the ministry, he drew “all his cares and studies this way”—being “diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh.” This concentration of mind and heart upon the work of his vocation soon began to develop his intellectual power.

Nor must we leave out of the account that element of all true greatness, known as *common sense*, which he possessed in an eminent degree; destitute of which, whatever other qualifications he might

have had, he could not have wielded the influence that he exerted as a preacher and a bishop. This quality of mind is displayed in the calm and just exercise of the reasoning powers, in the skillful adaptation of means to an end, and in the prudent use of such means. It implies a ready apprehension of the characters of men, and of the motives that actuate them. Its possessors usually exhibit self-reliance and firmness, and are distinguished for sound practical views. Call this shrewdness, good judgment, common sense, or whatever else, it is an all-important qualification for success in every department of life; and in none is it more requisite than in a Christian minister, and especially in a bishop. Without it, the most splendid talents in a preacher are frequently useless, and sometimes worse than useless—they but give notoriety to his errors, and thus elevate him to render his fall the more obvious. The history of many a brilliant mind furnishes a striking illustration of the truth of these remarks. The comets which blaze athwart our field of vision, attracting for awhile every eye, and causing the beautiful constellations to pale before their gorgeous splendors, soon retire into obscurity, and leave our planet to its former nightly gloom; and then the lately obscured and forgotten stars resume their office, lighting up the dome of the Creator's sublime temple of the natural universe with the sheen of their thousand lamps. Give me the less brilliant but constant stars in preference to the more glaring meteor and the fiery comet.

Few men have been more distinguished for sound

and unsophisticated judgment than Bishop McKendree. The want of early advantages threw him upon his own resources, induced self-reliance, and a manly independence in the investigation of truth, and in the expression of his convictions.

Of his school-boy days we have no minute account. We only know the boy by the man. We confess we have heard him quoted as an instance of those who develop slowly the faculties which eventually distinguish them as preachers and logicians, but whose early pulpit-efforts discourage the hopes of their friends.

Doubtless there have been many examples of this kind; nor do we make any claim to precocious smartness on behalf of Bishop McKendree. It may possibly be true that some of his friends were disappointed by his early performances; yet, if his powers developed slowly at first, it is certain that the rich, ripe fruit at last appeared in abundance, and continued to mature beyond the ordinary term of human life—presenting a result which heightens our respect for the dignity of our common nature, and the character of our holy religion. But we are constrained to say that we do not believe his early life, and especially his early ministry, evinced a want of mental quickness. It is a legend which may have comforted many a lazy and unpopular young preacher, but, so far as can now be known, is without foundation. The evidence is to the contrary. That he was modest, timid, and exceedingly sensitive, and that his taste was in advance of his capacity to execute, insomuch that his hesitation in

selecting words seemed sometimes almost stammering, we have no doubt; but that he was a dull boy, or an unpromising young preacher, we resolutely deny. Those only could think so who did not know him, or were incompetent to judge him.

The God of nature gave him not only a quick and logical mind, strong common sense, and an insatiable thirst for all useful knowledge, but so much of the imaginative faculty as enabled him to array the vivid conceptions of his mind in striking and appropriate topics; and yet these powers were so balanced by a keen sense of the ridiculous and the sophistical, and so regulated by his love of order, by an instinctive perception of propriety, and by an enlightened conscience, that in his mature years he presented as fine a specimen of a gentleman, a Christian, and a bishop as this or any other country has ever produced. Such a character is the product of native talent, mental culture, and divine grace. If either be deficient, the pattern is spoiled. We would not disparage the ministry. On the contrary, we regard the Protestant ministry as the most unselfish, pure-minded, and useful class of society. The world could poorly afford to do without them; and yet, that there are so few among them whose *whole lives* exhibit an elevated and commanding apprehension of the nature and ends of their vocation, is matter of humiliation; but that there are some who evince such a beautiful coincidence between profession and practice, and such ability and perseverance in the discharge of duty, calls for gratitude. Our divine Master raises up some such in every

age, as if to show of what our poor humanity is capable under the influence of his gospel.

His own account of himself, as well as the statements of others, agree in representing him to have been virtuous and comparatively moral. His parents were members of the Church of England—moral in their deportment, and regular in their attendance upon the ordinances. Of course, the family was brought up under the religious instructions of that Church, which was then the prevailing religion of the Southern colonies. The standard of Christian morals was, however, very low at that day; for when the clergy were given to ease, attending horse-races, balls, wine-parties, and indulging in dancing and card-playing, it might be expected that the religious training of the youth of the Church would be sadly defective. By common consent, it has been called an era of spiritual darkness, both in Europe and America. The Church, notwithstanding her doctrinal orthodoxy, and her boasted beautiful formulas, was laboring under a moral paralysis. In vain did a few of her gifted and truly pious ministers strive to resuscitate her. Whitefield, the Wesleys, and their coadjutors, with almost superhuman eloquence and power, essayed to arouse and reanimate her; and although they accomplished much good, and laid the foundation for a great reformation, yet, as a Church, she either coldly frowned upon these, her best friends and truest sons, or openly denounced and persecuted them. Her doors were everywhere shut against them. Her clergy cheered on the rabble, who,

finding their vices denounced and their consciences alarmed by the plain and fervid appeals of these holy men, were ever ready to resort to the most violent means for the purpose of silencing them. Their solemn protestations against their alleged defection toward the Church, and their oft-repeated assertions of love to it, and of their seeking its reformation in spiritual matters alone, were disregarded. Those in authority denied the necessity of a revival, and contemptuously spurned both them and their services, and in the same breath with which they sought to degrade these heroic men of God, they justified the fashionable follies and prevailing vices of the times. Thus the distinction between the Church of Christ and the world was either utterly obliterated, or was seen only in the external observance or non-observance of the ceremonies and sacraments. In morals, the line of division was invisible. Yet, even under such unfavorable circumstances, young McKendree was restrained from gross immoralities, and preserved a character for virtue and morality.

The following is his own account of this period of his life: "I do not recollect to have sworn more than one profane oath in my life, yet, as far back as memory serves, I am conscious of the prevalence of evil passions—of a heart disposed to wickedness—so that, notwithstanding the restraints by which I was kept within the bounds of a respectable morality, my heart was far from being right with God. It was 'deceitful, and desperately wicked.' Of this deplorable state of things I became exquisitely

sensible by reading the Holy Scriptures in school, when I was a small boy. For want of proper instruction, my apprehension of God the Redeemer, and of the Holy Scriptures, was very superficial. I literally 'understood as a child,' and with the simplicity of a child I yielded to the dictates of conscience, refrained from what appeared to be wrong, and, as a child, endeavored to imitate those holy men of God, as set forth in the Scriptures."

Bishop Soule, from whose sermon on the death of Bishop McKendree, delivered before the General Conference in 1836, we quote, adds: "Had these impressions been cherished by pious instructors, and by parents, who had the power as well as the form of godliness, there can be little doubt that this pious youth, like young Timothy, would 'from a child' have 'known the Holy Scriptures,' in such a manner as to have become 'wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus,' and thereby prepared the way for his entering upon the arduous duties of the ministry at a much earlier period than he did; but for want of such helps, and in consequence of opposition and discouragement from those who should have taught him the way of righteousness, and aided him to walk therein, at this tender age, his impressions were weakened, conscience became more inclined to slumber, and his religious resolutions were shaken. But still the fear of God did not forsake him."

It was about the commencement of the Revolution that the Methodist preachers (then under the direction of Mr. Wesley) first visited that section

of Virginia in which the McKendree family resided. William was then about nineteen years of age, possessed of exquisite sensibilities, and a heart all buoyant with anticipation. The ministry of the word was attended with the power of the Spirit, and many were convinced that these were the servants of the Most High God. The early religious impressions, which in a great measure had become extinguished in the mind of this interesting young man by the amusements of the world, were now revived and strengthened. He "yielded to conviction, and resolved to lead a new life." In conformity with this resolution, he proposed to unite with the Methodist Society as a seeker of religion, and was received on trial; but here again his resolution was shaken, and, halting by the way, he failed to obtain the prize. His own undisguised representation of his case clearly shows the danger of awakened persons, associating with those companions, however civil they may be, who neither fear nor love God, especially before age and experience have fortified the heart.

"But my attachment to worldly associates," says Bishop McKendree, "who were civil and respectful in their deportment, had grown with my growth, and my conviction was not accompanied with sufficient firmness to dissolve the connection; and their conduct being accommodated to my reformed manners, I continued to enjoy the friendship, both of the Society and of the world, but in a very imperfect degree. They continued to counteract and impair each other, until the love of the world prevailed,

and my relish for genuine piety departed. I peaceably retired from the Society, while my conduct continued to secure their friendship."

The narrative of Bishop Soule proceeds: "In this situation, with no material change in his religious state, except a gradual decline of concern for the salvation of his soul, he continued for several years; but his abiding conviction of the importance and necessity of religion, and his exquisite sensibility to consistency of character, preserved him from gross immoralities, and prevented a rapid progress in the way of sin. In the year 1787, he being about thirty years of age, a powerful and extensive revival of religion commenced in Brunswick Circuit, in which he lived, under the ministry of that devoted servant of God, the Rev. John Easter. In the course of this year, Mr. Easter added about twelve hundred members to the Church.

This year (1787) was the period of his conversion to God—the year in which he received that inward and spiritual revelation of the Son of God, which is an indispensable qualification for preaching his unsearchable riches. This great change is thus described by his own pen: "My convictions were renewed; they were deep and pungent. The great deep of my heart was broken up; its desperately wicked nature was disclosed, and the awfully ruinous consequences clearly appeared. My repentance was sincere. I was desirous of salvation, and became willing to be saved upon any terms; and after a sore and sorrowful travail of three days, which were employed in hearing Mr. Easter, and in fast-

ing and prayer, while that man of God was showing a large congregation the way of salvation by faith with a clearness which, at the same time, astonished and encouraged me, I ventured my all on Christ. In a moment my soul was delivered of a burden too heavy to be borne, and joy instantly succeeded sorrow. For a short space of time I was fixed in silent admiration, giving glory to God for his unspeakable goodness to such an unworthy creature."

But, alas! although this change was great and glorious—although conscious of sensible comfort, and at the same time enabled to cry, "Abba, Father"—yet his experience accords with but too many, in this, that the delightful state of his emotions was presently succeeded by doubts as to the depth and reality of the change. In this state of temptation he continued six weeks; then a new and overwhelming blessing removed all doubt, and assured him of peace and pardon. The enemy had suggested that it was presumptuous to believe that so important a work could be accomplished so soon, if at all; and the vast interests which the profession of religion involve made him correspondingly fearful of a mistake in relation to it. His temptations were strengthened, doubtless, by the denunciations which he often heard of those "strange zealots"—those "irregular lay-preachers"—who, ignoring the doctrine of a personal and unbroken succession of three distinct orders in the ministry, and the indispensableness of ordination from such supposed monopolists of all clerical authority, dared to preach

Christ crucified to their fellow-men; for, unfortunately, there were those then, as now, and as there were in the beginning of the Christian Church, who were ready to forbid all others from casting out devils who "follow not us." But if Christ, who actually did daily cast out devils, so pointedly re-proved this proscriptive spirit in the apostles, with what language would he speak to those now who would hinder others from doing the good which they either cannot or will not do? Surely those who claim the exclusive right to preach, and to save souls, ought to be remarkably zealous in their vocation; and even then, if they would imitate the Master, they should not refuse the coöperation of any who truly "cast out devils;" for if they who cast them out in his name "cannot speak evil" of Christ, surely Christ's apostles cannot speak evil of those who "do the works of Christ."

This revival, which began under Mr. Easter, and of which young McKendree and thousands of others became the happy subjects, was a novelty to many. Most of the clergy of the Established Church opposed it publicly, and ridiculed it in private. The great body of the Church stood aghast at it. It was "wild-fire," "self-delusion," or "hypocrisy." No doubt hundreds of honest and conscientious persons thought they were doing God service in striving to repress what they regarded as a "religious frenzy." In their estimation, Mr. Easter, and all those who, like him, strove to arouse the torpid consciences of sinners, and proclaimed a present pardon, and an internal evidence of that par-

don, were disturbers of the peace of society as well as heretics. To the Churchman, both the preacher and his matter were offensive—the first wanting the odor of succession, the latter, at the same time, condemning his profession, his experience, and his practice. To the honest and devout Calvinist, having in his mind Calvin's "horrible decree," the earnest offer of Christ's death and mediation, as means available by faith for the salvation of all men, without distinction and without reservation, seemed presumptuous, if not profane; so that, in whatever else they disagreed, Churchmen, Calvinists, and Quakers, united in condemning those who seemed to be "turning the world upside down." Still the people flocked by hundreds and thousands to hear them, and multitudes became the subjects of this strange work. Their plain, earnest, and scriptural appeals to conscience; their solemn and devout manners; their disinterestedness, and the extraordinary faith and dauntless moral courage which Easter and his associates exhibited, and, above all, the wonderful power which attended their ministry, were well calculated to excite attention. And they did excite attention. The private houses, old-field school-houses, and the few meeting-houses where circuit-preaching had been ordinarily heard, were soon found insufficient to contain the immense throngs of eager listeners. The barns were resorted to, but were soon found to be too small. To the groves—Nature's own temples—the crowds repaired. The villages were emptied of population; the mechanic laid aside his tools; the farmer stopped his

plows, and mounted his family upon the horses—sometimes two and three upon a horse—servants, and those who could find no other means of conveyance, started on foot. The roads were crowded. The vicinity of the place of worship was covered with horses and vehicles, and thousands gathered around the temporary pulpit, and held their breath to catch every syllable of the man of God.

Mr. Easter was a man of great purity of life; of a sound mind, and deep religious feelings; and what he clearly apprehended and strongly felt, he spoke with the confidence of one who knows he delivers a message from God. He never indulged in metaphysical discussions, and rarely in doctrinal expositions. His themes were repentance, salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, and the witness of the Spirit. His preaching was of the experimental and practical kind; his manner hortative. Those who knew him, revered and loved him. When, upon such an occasion as adverted to above, he arose in the immense congregation, his appearance and manner inspired awe. His piercing black eyes, his awful earnestness, and his almost miraculous faith, arrested every hearer, and transfixed the most careless. His sentences, in the beginning of his addresses, were short, and his language solemn and pointed. There was no mannerism nor circumlocution. He was full of his subject, and intent only upon the rescue of sinners from impending wrath. At once he went to work, invoking the presence and power of God, admonishing Christians to pray, and when his faith was "mighty," assuring them that souls would

be converted there that day. Then he would begin his appeal to sinners. Their depraved and guilty condition, their duty, the necessity for decision, and the consequences involved, together with the means and evidences of pardon and regeneration, were concisely and overwhelmingly exhibited. His voice was of wondrous pathos and power—now soft as an *Æolian* harp, while persuading the hesitating, or soothing the penitent; anon ringing out like the denunciations from Mount Ebal, when successive peals of curses reverberated against the incorrigibly impenitent; and then again, “in language sweet as angels use,” whispering to the believing penitent blessings richer and more abundant than ever died away in soft and melodious echoes from Mount Gerizim over the beautiful Valley of Shechem—and yet his whole manner was natural and unstudied. He would have despised himself if he had felt conscious that he was aping the orator, or seeking aught but the salvation of his hearers. His communion with God was too intimate to allow any less serious or worthy motive; for he who walks closely with God, will be fearfully earnest while pleading with man.

The power of the Almighty attended his efforts. The pious portion of his audience sustained him by their prayers, and rose with him in faith and zeal as he increased in fervor and force, until the immense concourse, agitated by the conflicting emotions of consternation, grief, and joy, at last could restrain themselves no longer, and gave vent to the long-pent but now resistless feelings of their hearts. Some fled with alarm, others felt as if impaled,

while many fell to the ground as if stricken with a sudden bolt from heaven. Many were happily converted while he was speaking, until at last some fresh accession to the number of penitents, or converts, would so swell the wave of emotion that his voice would be drowned; and then mingled shouts, prayers, and songs would rise like the peans of victory and the wail of the wounded over a battle-field.

Such were the scenes often witnessed in those days; and let others call it confusion, fanaticism, or whatever they may please, I believe it to have been the work of God, and pray that such scenes may never cease in the Methodist Church. And let all who revere his memory recollect that Bishop McKendree was a subject of this glorious work. Surely his life and his death might be regarded as a vindication of such revivals.

Nor was John Easter the only Methodist preacher of that era eminent for piety, talent, and usefulness. Among many others deserving to be held in lasting remembrance, we may mention Freeborn Garrettson, Reuben and Ira Ellis, William Watters, Hope Hull, Ezekiel Cooper, Mark Moore, Richard Whatcoat, Jesse Lee, and Philip Bruce. Indeed, the list could be readily swelled to a multitude. Many of them were not only remarkable for native intellect, but were highly respectable as to scholarship.

CHAPTER III.

Letter from W. McKendree to Bishop Asbury, in 1803—His conversion—Entrance on the ministry—Joins the Virginia Conference—Misled by Mr. O'Kelly—Returns to the work.

AMONG the papers of Bishop McKendree is the following highly interesting communication. It appears that Bishop Asbury had repeatedly urged him to give a narrative in writing, of the kind, and it is addressed, therefore, to him, and was written in 1803. As it was prepared with some care, and gives a more minute account of his early life, and also of his conversion, his call to the ministry, and of a very interesting incident of his life in connection with the secession of the Rev. James O'Kelly, than can be found elsewhere, the letter is given in full. The reader will pardon the repetition, in substance, of a part of the last chapter.

RESPECTED FRIEND AND BROTHER:—You have repeatedly requested me to give you a written circumstantial account of the dealings of God with my soul, my call to the ministry, and some of the most remarkable events of my life. Until very lately I have indulged such an aversion to writing about myself, that I did not intend to comply with your request; but your solicitation, having been

seconded by others—this, together with a thought that my own soul may be quickened thereby—first, by meditating on past mercies and blessings while I call to mind my former exercises and God's tender mercies and gracious dealings with my soul; and, secondly, should you see proper to send it to the press, that I may derive benefit, in future, from reading what the lapse of time and trouble might make me forget: these considerations have triumphed over my natural aversion to the task. I shall therefore attempt a plain and simple narrative, and cast it as my mite into the treasury.

It is now fifteen years that I have been in the traveling ministry—from the year 1788 to the present date—in which time I have traveled extensively through Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and the territory west of the Ohio, now State of Ohio; as also some parts of North and South Carolina.

The first divine impression that I remember to have been under was when I was a school-boy. By reading the exercises and practices of holy men, as related in the Bible; of their holy lives—prostrating themselves before the Lord—praying and conversing with Jehovah, and the Lord God speaking to and comforting them, my soul was filled with such a sense of his majesty and goodness as awed my feelings into reverence. And I had such ideas of the condition of those holy men, that my heart glowed to be like them.

I would frequently seek solitary places in the woods, there fall upon my face and weep freely while I thought I was talking to Jehovah. This

practice I followed until I became so serious that I was taken notice of. The school-master (who was a vain man, and boarded at my father's) and others, began to laugh at me, and make remarks, and finally laughed me out of all my seriousness. I then heedlessly pursued the pleasures of the world, and do not remember to have had any more serious impressions for several years. My own experience has led me to care for those who are under religious impressions in their early days. Many are their dangers—great is the blessing of proper instructors; and the want of these is, in all probability, the cause of much infidelity.

The next religious impression which I distinctly recollect, was occasioned by hearing the following verse sung:

Ye sons of Adam, vain and young,
Indulge your hearts, indulge your tongue;
Enjoy the day of mirth, but know
There is a day of judgment too.

"The *day of judgment*" left an impression on my mind. It sunk deeply into my thoughts, and interrupted my peace for many days; but it gradually wore away, and I once more freely enjoyed the pleasures of youth.

Some time after the Methodist preachers came into the neighborhood, a revival of religion took place: my father, mother, and several others became professors of religion, and many joined the Church. I was then deeply convinced of sin, and resolved to set out and serve the Lord. For some time I was

very serious, but after awhile my religious concern gradually abated, and I insensibly glided into the spirit of the world, and drank deeper into the practice thereof than I had ever done before. In great compassion the Lord still extended his mercy to me, and checked my thoughtless career by a severe attack of the bilious fever. I was brought to view death as at the door; all human help seemed to fail. I now viewed myself as within a step of eternity, and alas, I was without God! I had no hope of future happiness! I was convinced that, dying as I was, I should be eternally miserable, and, to complete my astonishment and wretchedness, I could not indulge a hope of obtaining mercy in that situation. I considered myself as one who had preferred the service of the devil to the enjoyment of religion, to the very last; and now to ask God to pardon my sins, and take me to himself, when I could serve myself no longer, appeared to be the most unreasonable thing in the world.

I therefore utterly despaired of mercy, unless God should be graciously pleased to raise me up from my bed of affliction, and thus grant me an opportunity to seek his face. For this I earnestly prayed. While sore-belabored with pain, the world appeared insignificant, and of trivial consequence; indeed, could I have purchased peace by giving the whole world, the price then seemed to me inconsiderable. But even while it seemed to myself that I was so willing to embrace mercy upon any terms, I well remember a thought that threw me into confusion by showing me my error. The following idea was

suggested: "If the Lord would raise you up, and convert your soul, would you be willing to go and preach the gospel?" At this nature shrunk, will refused, and I trembled when I found myself indisposed to prompt obedience.

Yet I continued to plead, and the Lord raised me from the jaws of death, "covering the bones with young flesh." But alas, how weak are resolutions springing from fear! As my strength returned, I lost sight of my danger, and the resolution, which I thought was so firm, weakened in proportion. At last I lost the desire, and returned to my old companions and the business of the world.

In this situation I continued until the great revival of religion took place in Brunswick Circuit, under Mr. John Easter, in 1787. On a certain Sabbath I visited a gentleman who lived in the neighborhood; he and his lady were going to church, to hear a Mr. Gibson, a local Methodist preacher. It was, of course, during the Revolutionary War, when the church was open to any occupant—the clergy having abandoned their flocks and the country, and fled home to England. Upon my going to the house of my friend, he declined going to church; sent a servant with his wife, and we spent the time in reading a comedy and drinking wine. Mrs. — stayed late at church, but at last, when we were impatient for dinner, she returned, and brought strange things to our ears. With astonishment flushing in her countenance, she began to tell whom she left "in a flood of tears," who were "down on the floor," who were "converted," what an "up-

roar" was going on among the people, cries for mercy and shouts for joy, etc. She also informed us that Mr. John Easter was to preach at that place on the following Tuesday. My heart was touched at her representation. I resolved to seek religion, and began, in good earnest, to pray for it that evening.

Tuesday I went to church, fasting and praying. Mr. Easter preached from John iii. 19-22, "*And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world,*" etc. *The word reached my heart.* From this time I had no peace of mind; I was completely miserable. My heart was broken up, and I saw that it was evil above all things, and "desperately wicked." A view of God's forbearance, and of the debasing sin of ingratitude, of which I had been guilty in grieving the Spirit of God, overwhelmed me with confusion.

Now my conscience roared like a lion. "The pains of hell got hold of me." I concluded that I had committed the "unpardonable sin," and had thoughts of giving up all for lost. For three days I might have said, "My bed shall comfort me, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions, so that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life." Job vii. 7-15. But in the evening of the third day deliverance came. While Mr. Easter was preaching, I was praying as well as I could, for I was almost ready to despair of mercy. Suddenly doubts and fears fled, hope sprung up in my soul, and *the burden was removed.* I knew that God was love—that there was mercy even for me, and I rejoiced in silence.

Mr. Easter confidently asserted that God had converted my soul; but I did not believe it, for I had formed to myself an idea of conversion—how it would come, and what must follow; and what I then felt did not answer to my idea. Therefore, I did not believe that I was converted, but I knew there was mercy for me, and I greatly rejoiced in that. However, I soon found myself in an uncomfortable condition, for I immediately began to seek and expect a burden of sin, answerable to my idea, in order to get converted. But the burden was gone, and I could not recover it. At times I had flashes of joy, yea, felt the life and power of living faith; but as soon as I would advert to my conversion, faith would fail, hope languish, and comfort die, because I doubted my conversion. With desire I sought rest, but I thought that greater distress than I had felt must precede that blessing, and therefore refused to be comforted. And thus, sir, for several weeks I experienced all the anguish of grasping at an object of the greatest importance, and missing my aim—of laying hold of life and salvation, then falling back into the vortex of disappointment and distress, until I may say I was as alone “sparrow on the house-top;” “my teeth chattered like a swallow, my bones were pierced in me in the night season, and my sinews took no rest.” Job xxx. 17.

But deliverance was at hand. Mr. Easter came round, and his Master came with him, and in the time of meeting the Lord, who is merciful and kind, blessed me with the *witness of the Spirit*; and

then, sir, I could rejoice indeed—yes, with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Within twenty-four hours after this I was twice tempted to think my conversion was delusive, and not genuine, because I did not receive the witness of the Spirit at the same time.

But I instantly applied to the throne of grace, and, in the duty of prayer, the Lord delivered me from the enemy, and from that day to this I have never doubted my conversion. I have pitied, and do still pity, those who, under the influence of certain doctrines, are led to give the preference to a doubting experience, and therefore can only say, "If I ever was converted," "I hope I am converted," "I fear I never was converted," etc., but can never say, "*We know* that we have passed from death unto life." In this respect, "darkness, in part, has happened to Zion," but I hope the time is not far distant when truth and religion shall triumph over error and form.

Not long after I had confidence in my acceptance with God, Mr. Gibson preached us a sermon on sanctification, and I felt its weight. When Mr. Easter came, he enforced the same doctrines. This led me more minutely to examine the emotions of my heart. I found remaining corruption—embraced the doctrine of sanctification, and diligently sought the blessing it holds forth. The more I sought the blessing of sanctification, the more I felt the need of it—and the more important did that blessing appear. In its pursuit, my soul grew in grace and in the faith that overcomes the

world. But there was an aching void which made me cry,

'Tis worse than death my God to love,
And not my God alone.

One morning I walked into the field, and while I was musing, such an overwhelming power of the Divine Being overshadowed me, as I had never experienced before. Unable to stand, I sunk to the ground, more than filled with transport. My cup ran over, and I shouted aloud.

Had it not been for a new set of painful exercises which now came upon me, I might have rejoiced "evermore;" but my heart was enlarged, and I saw more clearly than ever before the danger of an unconverted state. For such persons I prayed with anxious care. At times, when called upon to pray in public, my soul would get into an agony, and the Lord would, in great compassion, pour out his Spirit; souls were convicted and converted, and Zion rejoiced abundantly in those days. Without a thought of preaching, I began to tell my acquaintances what the Lord had done for me, and could do for them. It had its effect, and lasting impressions were made. Thus I was imperceptibly led on until the preachers and people began to urge me to speak more publicly. This brought on a painful affliction of mind.

While I have meditated on the subject with a disposition to submit, if it was the will of the Lord to call me to preach, the Scriptures have opened to my mind, and presented me with such lively pic-

tures of virtue and vice, and their consequences, as would fill me with "painful joy and pleasing smart;" and I would be almost ready to say, "Here am I, send me." But when I would reflect on appearing in public with the qualifications which I possessed, I felt deeply humbled and greatly discouraged. The importance of the cause, and what it might suffer from an incompetent and an injudicious advocate, made me fear that my exercises were not from God—that he never would call such a creature as I was to preach his gospel. Thus worried and distressed, I have fallen on my knees, and with many tears begged the Lord to take me to heaven, and so put an end to the doubtful case. My mind was entirely diverted from my temporal concerns, and wholly devoted to the subject of religion.

On a certain day, as I sat at a table, my father stepped in and addressed me thus: "William, has not the Lord called you to preach the gospel?" I answered, "I cannot tell; I do not know what a call to preach the gospel implies." He added, "I believe he has, and I charge you not to quench the Spirit." For a moment I was as one thunder-struck. We both shed tears. I asked him why he thought the Lord had called me to preach the gospel. He answered, "While you lay sick of the fever"—alluding to my illness already mentioned—"when the doctor and all your friends had given you up for lost, I was greatly afflicted at the thought of your dying in your sins. I applied myself to the throne of grace, and prayed incessantly. While I was on my knees, the Lord manifested himself to me in an

uncommon manner, *and gave me an assurance that you should live to preach the gospel*, and I have never lost my confidence, although you have been too careless." He then repeated his caution not to quench the Spirit.

In this undetermined condition of mind I continued until it pleased the Lord to lay me upon a bed of affliction. Mr. Easter visited me. On the next day, when they were about starting to meeting, he prayed for me—not as men generally pray, but in a manner and with a zeal peculiar to himself. Under his prayer I was blessed; my soul was filled with joy. He proceeded to tell the Lord that "the harvest was great, but the laborers were few"—that I had been urged by the Spirit, but had refused to obey. He prayed the Lord to raise me up, and thrust me into his vineyard. I recovered; and from that time I spoke more frequently and freely in public, and the Lord condescended to encourage me by blessing both my hearers and myself.

In the ninth month after I received the witness of my acceptance, the District Conference came on. It was held in Petersburg, Virginia. Mr. Easter requested me to fix myself and attend the Conference. I did so, and he kindly took me to his lodging. Upon his going to the Conference-room, he invited me to come up at a certain hour and see the preachers. I went accordingly, and the first thing after prayer was to read out the preachers' stations; and you announced that I was appointed to Mecklenburg Circuit, with Philip Cox.

This, I confess sir, was an unexpected shock; but your gentle manner of proceeding with the young preachers presently restored me to a degree of ease. When dismissed, I was walking in another room, when my Presiding Elder came in, and discovering my agitation, took me in his arms and said, "While you were standing before the Conference, I believe God showed me that he had a work for you to do," and repeated, "Don't deceive me," in the most feeling manner. This, sir, had the most happy effect. It determined my unsettled mind. I only wanted to know what was right, to do it as well as I could. I had the fullest confidence in the preachers, and in reflecting upon the character and judgment of those who had recommended me, and of the Conference who had admitted me, strengthened by what the Presiding Elder, with flowing tears, had just said to me, I resolved to reject my doubts, submit to their judgment, take the work to which I was appointed, and fill my place as well as I could. Thus, after more than eight months of painful suspense, my heart was "*fixed*," and I set out for my circuit.

But before I enter upon the ensuing part of my own history, suffer me to make some observations on what I have witnessed respecting my much-loved friend and father in the gospel, John Easter.

When Mr. Easter came to Brunswick Circuit, there was very little appearance of religion in our neighborhood. Upon his coming, a revival took place, and in the course of the year about two hundred and fifty joined the Church within ten miles

of where we resided, and about eighteen hundred* were added in the circuit. Mr. Easter possessed an uncommon degree of faith. It was objected to him, that "instead of praying, he commanded God, as if the Lord was to obey man." The following is a specimen of what I was an eye-witness. While preaching to a large concourse of people in the open air, at a time of considerable drought, it began to thunder, a cloud approached, and drops of rain fell. He stopped preaching, and besought the Lord to withhold the rain until evening—to pour out his Spirit, convert the people, and then water the earth. He then resumed his subject. The appearance of rain increased—the people began to get uneasy—some moved to take off their saddles; when, in his peculiar manner, he told the Lord that there were "sinners there that must be converted

* Bishop McKendree leaves the number blank, and it is filled from the following authority:

"The year 1787 is gratefully remembered in the Methodist history of Virginia, for the most extensive and glorious revival of religion that ever occurred in the State." "The accounts which have come down to us of that powerful manifestation of the Spirit represent it as almost miraculous." "But although the work of the Lord was generally revived, its most powerful manifestations seem to have been confined to the District over which the Rev. James O'Kelly presided; and in this District, the most powerful displays of spiritual influence were witnessed in the Brunswick, Sussex, and Amelia Circuits. In each of these circuits great multitudes were turned to the Lord. In Sussex Circuit about sixteen hundred were converted; in Brunswick, about eighteen hundred; and in Amelia, about eight hundred."—*Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee*, pp. 204, 205; also, *History M. E. Church*, by Dr. Bangs, Vol. I., pp. 263–267.

or be damned," and prayed that he would "stop the bottles of heaven until the evening." He closed his prayer, and assured us, in the most confident manner, that we might keep our seats—that it would not rain to wet us; that "souls are to be converted here to-day—my God assures me of it, and you may believe it." The congregation became composed, and we did not get wet; for the clouds parted, and although there was a fine rain on both sides of us, there was none where we were until night. The Lord's Spirit was poured out in an uncommon degree, many were convicted, and a considerable number professed to be converted that day.

Mr. Easter excited great attention. Hundreds, and sometimes thousands, attended his appointments. Frequently, while he was preaching, the foundations of the place would seem to be shaken, and the people to be moved like the trees of the forest when shaken by a mighty tempest. Many were "the slain of the Lord," and many were made spiritually alive. If my memory serves me, *four hundred* were converted at a four-days' meeting. But Satan's kingdom did not suffer this loss without a struggle. Powerful, and sometimes fierce, was the opposition Mr. Easter had to contend with; but the Lord gave him grace according to his day. In the midst of a congregation, a man stepped to Mr. Easter, caught him by the bosom, and raised a horse-whip over his head. In that position, a few words passed between them. Mr. Easter began to pray, but when his prayer was ended, his antagonist

was gone. Mr. Easter proceeded with his meeting without farther interruption.

On another occasion, he reproved a man who was at a few yards' distance, on an elevated seat in the congregation. The man, as afterward appeared, had covenanted to abuse the preacher, and for this purpose had armed himself with a club, which he shook at the preacher. Another and a sharper reproof followed. The enraged man approached Mr. Easter, brandishing his weapon, with vengeance flashing in his countenance. The preacher calmly said, "I regard the spilling of my blood for the sake of Christ no more than the bite of a fly," but warned the furious man of the most awful consequences on his own part. The man was near enough to strike him, but Mr. Easter dared him to strike, telling him what God would do if he laid the weight of his hand upon him. The man's countenance changed—he presently turned round and walked off. "I told you the devil is a coward," said Mr. Easter, as the crest-fallen man withdrew. These, sir, may serve as specimens of the displays of divine power which attended the ministry of that dear friend of ours.

In 1788, I was appointed to Mecklenburg Circuit. This was a fortunate station for me. Mr. Cox, with whom I was appointed to travel, was an instructor and father to me. The old professors knew how to sympathize with young preachers. It looked to me like they wished to bear a part of the cross for me. In this circuit there were many deeply-experienced Christians, by whose walk and conversation I prof-

ited much. I hope I shall never forget how sweetly they used to talk of the triumphs of grace and the love of Jesus. After a sufficient trial, I expected the preachers would be convinced that I never would make a profitable preacher; that I should by that means return to the comforts which I had left behind. But the year rolled round, and I was "continued on trial." The dear people seemed unwilling to part with me, for we had spent some sweet moments together.

In 1789, I took my station in Cumberland Circuit, Virginia, where I traveled part of the year, and then was moved by the Presiding Elder to Mecklenburg, an adjoining circuit, where I traveled the year before.

During this year my doubts with regard to my call to the ministry subsided in a great measure. I began to enjoy a tolerable degree of comfort in my calling. The members of the Church were very kind, and we saw, in some degree, the fruit of our labor. The old members were quickened, and new ones added.

But a painful affliction of another nature arose. A *divisive spirit* began to torment us. Methodism had progressed beyond all expectation. The few Church-regulations which were adapted to the infant state of the Church would by no means cover all the cases that a rapid increase of preachers and people brought forth. The year before, a delegated number had been appointed to form regulations to meet our present difficulties.* They had met.

* The Council.

Our Presiding Elder (James O'Kelly) was one of the number. And they had unanimously agreed to a plan which was to be laid before the Conferences of the year, to be adopted or rejected. But before the Conference came on, Mr. O'Kelly changed his mind, and began, in our private interviews, to inform me of the imminent danger of near-approaching ruin which our then flourishing Church would in all probability suffer; that this mischief had itself a cause, which, according to unequivocal indications, was the want of religion in a party of leading characters in the ministry—yourself, sir, at the head of them—whose unbounded thirst for power and money, as I understood him, was to pull down destruction on the Church of God.

I then had, and still have, a tender regard for the prosperity of Zion, and watched whatever I thought would injure her, with a jealous eye. I examined what our delegates had done, and formed the best judgment I could, according to my information, and disapproved of the plan. This gave weight to the private representation of my Presiding Elder.

On my way to the Conference in Petersburg, I fell in company with him and several other preachers, who held a consultation on the way, and also after we reached town, and pretty well determined the business before it came up for action in the Conference. However, you arrived and laid that business before us. The result was, as you very well know, we rejected it altogether, and refused to adopt any accommodating plan.

But I was somewhat disappointed ; for instead of breaking out like a tyrant, you proposed us all for deacon's orders. We elected each other, and the greater number of the preachers of that District were ordained to the office of deacon, and appointed to the several circuits, with our former Presiding Elder at our head, on the south side of James River.

In 1790, I was appointed to travel with Jesse Nicholson, on Portsmouth Circuit; but was removed, and spent the latter part of the year with William Spencer, on Surry Circuit. This was a year of much comfort to my soul. I found an affectionate people indeed: many were deeply experienced saints, who were a blessing to me. "As iron sharpeneth iron," so did the conversation of those brethren provoke me to love and good works. I found father, mother, brother, and sister, indeed and in truth. It was my meat and drink to employ my spare moments in study. Fasting and prayer was a pleasure. I had an almost uninterrupted heaven below. The work of the Lord prospered in our hands, particularly in the latter part of the year. A considerable number of members was added to the societies. When elders rule well, they are to be counted worthy of double honor, and esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake. But alas, my greatest affliction in those days came from where I ought to have had comfort! When my old friend (Mr. O'K.) visited us, much of the spare time was taken up in private communication and consultation, the subject-matter of which was

"the manners of a party which more and more manifested the badness of their policy and principles, and must," as he said, "sooner or later, inevitably ruin the Church of God." The result was a proclamation, summoning all the preachers to meet in Mecklenburg on a certain day.

It was in the interval of Conference, and was a new thing among us; but the occasion was thought to be of such importance as to justify it. We met according to order, and formed a council. Our Elder told us much. He met with some opposition, but this gave much pain. A conclusion was formed in opposition to the offensive "party," and our old friend thought the preachers left much united, with one or two exceptions, who were supposed to be "creatures of the party." Our demand was a General Conference.

I really loved God, and sought the welfare of his Church, and was therefore disposed to listen to her complaints. The old gentleman (Mr. O'K.) I looked upon as her friend—her mouth; and so great was my confidence in him, that his word was next to gospel with me. I heard him, and believed what I heard. Upon hearing one side of the story only, so far as I received the report, I had to give up my confidence in the "party preachers"—or the "Bishop and his creatures," as they were called.

Perhaps you may remember, that about this time I informed you that I had lost confidence in yourself. At least, I shall never forget your answer, which was, "I do not wonder at that, brother:

sometimes we can see with our eyes; sometimes we can see only with our ears."

But, alas! with the loss of confidence, I began insensibly to lose my love for "the Bishop and his creatures"—in reality, my best friends, misrepresented; which prepares the way and leads into the worst of miseries. And this, sir, I conceive to be one of the broadest, foulest blots of the schismatic spirit. For "God is love, and whoso dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." And "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, because ye love one another." But love began to fail.

At the next Conference, (1791,) I was stationed on Amelia Circuit. Here, as well as I remember, our Conference was changed from the spring, and the next was appointed to meet on Christmas holiday. I have nothing of particular importance to remark on this station. I enjoyed peace of mind, and comfortable fellowship with those among whom I labored. We began to have some hope of a General Conference, to adjust our conflicting opinions; and our fears began to subside.

December, 1791.—Conference met at Lane's Chapel. Peace seemed to gladden our hearts. We were informed that a General Conference was to meet the following November; that differences were adjusted, and our old friend was satisfied.

I expect you have not forgotten the joy that appeared in the Conference among the young preachers. Here I was ordained to the office of an elder, and appointed to Greenville Circuit, which went

through my old neighborhood. This was the first station that I felt my will opposed to. It fixed me in the midst of my old acquaintances, many of whom were in our societies before me, and considered themselves my superiors. It was a sifting time in those parts, and I expected some of them would have to be excluded. This I feared they would not bear from me, which was the cause of my unwillingness to go to that circuit. But in this I was disappointed. I believe I never went through the business of a circuit with more ease. Although many were turned out, there were no fixed prejudices in consequence of the administration, that I know of. True, we had but few additions to the Church this year; yet we had many sweet and precious meetings. The work of sanctification revived. While I was preaching from "Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth," a local preacher cried aloud for the blessing. When I came to that place again, he professed to be sanctified, and zealously and profitably enforced the doctrine. I went home with him from meeting. He conversed of death as a thing familiar and at hand. He professed to have only one wish, which was that he might be favored with a quick passage from this to the other world. He was a smith by trade. I parted with him to see him no more. Before I returned again, he was killed by a flash of lightning, in the presence of several persons, while standing over his fire. Thus the Lord granted his desire, and took him to rest.

Happily disappointed in my expected troubles on

this circuit, blessed with refreshing showers of grace, and, as I thought, with peace among ourselves, our old friend came round. Our hearts were glad at the sight. But instead of confirming the peace we were told of at the last Conference, and training me up in the way I ought to go, alas! the old subject was introduced, and I was informed that you were not sincere in the peace concluded; that it was a political contrivance—the real design being to gratify your ambition, by a method which was to ruin the Church. I was unfortunate enough to believe the report, and from this time counteracting measures were consulted.

In November, 1792, the General Conference came on. Soon after I left my circuit to attend it, I fell in company with our Elder, and one or two others. At Col. Clayton's the number increased. William Spencer and S. Cowles were sent forward—only two were permitted to continue in company with the Elder. I was one of the favored number. We arrived at the seat of the General Conference, and were appointed to lodge together. Conference commenced. Division of sentiment, indeed! Our lodging-room was a council-chamber. Evil was determined against the Connection, justified by the supposition that the Bishop and his creatures were working the ruin of the Church to gratify their pride and ambition.

The old gentlemen broke off. I and some others obtained liberty of the Conference to return home, and set out for Virginia. We had many consultations, were often confused in our deliberations; and

the rest of the company having left us, the old gentleman and myself traveled the greater part of the way together. He unfolded his plan. It was to be "a glorious Church"—"no slavery," etc., etc.

But it was founded upon the supposition that a ruinous government was being introduced by the revolutionizing Conference he had left. The supposed design of the Bishop answered to the root, and the more ingenious of our cabinet discovered the trunk and all the branches of this tree. *It was "dark"—it was "popery"!* It was a horrible thing!

But different conclusions followed. One S. D. resolved to attend the approaching District Conference, and take his station. Three broke off from the Connection, and set up in opposition to it. Neither of these methods would satisfy me. I therefore refused to take a regular station at Conference, because I expected to reject the "monstrous system" when it should appear; but met you and the Presiding Elder a few days after Conference, and took a station.

I was stationed in the city of Norfolk; and O how was I surprised, in the course of the year, to find the form of discipline entirely different from what I had expected, and also to find just cause to begin to withdraw my confidence from my old and best-beloved friend! Now I began to feel like one out at sea without a compass. Urged by my professed friend to leave my station and not appear at Conference, and shot at by some of my real but injudicious friends, my condition was delicate and unpleasant. But Ira Ellis, my Presiding Elder,

was a comfort to me. From him I obtained information and counsel which were of inestimable value to me in my dilemma. In fine, it is my opinion that the Church is much indebted to Infinite Goodness for a man of his wisdom and prudence at that day.

On this critical station the Lord was singularly good to me. In the midst of my confusion, I had access to the throne of grace, and was enabled to preach. Mercy and power attended the word, and the people were blessed; so that I had refreshing cordials in the midst of many bitter draughts.

WM. MCKENDREE.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. McKendree joins the Virginia Conference, 1787—Appointed to Mecklenburg Circuit—Burchett, Massie, Valentine Cook, and John McGee admitted the same time—Numbers in Society—Conference of 1789—Cumberland Circuit—Conference of 1790—Ordained deacon—The Council a failure—Appointed to Portsmouth Circuit—Rev. D. Jarratt—Extracts from Diary.

EVERY genuine conversion to God is characterized by love to God and man; and as the first leads to adoration and filial obedience to the divine will, so the second induces an earnest desire for the welfare of others, and efforts to do them good. They are at once the evidence of Christian experience, and the guarantee of practical goodness. The demonstration of their existence, and of their divine origin, is seen in the purity of the lives of those who profess conversion, for “every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” These traits of regeneration were exhibited by young McKendree. In the artless narrative given from his own pen, in the preceding chapter, we have had portrayed his conviction, conversion, and sanctification. Shortly after his profession of religion, he began to converse with his friends and associates, telling them what God had done for his soul, and persuading them to come to Christ. He

could not be silent nor idle. Christ was so precious, religion so important, and sin so ruinous, he must speak and work. Fealty to God and duty to his neighbor demanded it. Soon he was found taking part in the public religious exercises, such as prayer-meetings, love-feasts, and class-meetings. Fruits of his labors began to appear; many were convicted and converted. Presently his mind became painfully excited upon the subject of preaching; and the fact that many of his most devoted and intelligent friends, both in the laity and among the preachers, believed he was called of God to the ministry, increased this excitement. Mr. Easter, his spiritual father, fully concurred in this sentiment, and urged him to go with him around the circuit. He yielded and started, but became so increasingly fearful lest he should go without the divine warrant for his mission, that he gave way to his fears, and returned home before the round was completed. Deeply did he love the cause of God, but so humble were his views of his fitness for the holy office, that he shrunk from it. He had been taught to associate a classical education and a theological training with the exercise of the ministry. He had only an English education.

And then, the responsibilities of the ministry were alarming to his sensitive and modest mind. Afraid to go forward, and yet dreading the result of refusing to do so, he was, to use his own language, "tossed to and fro." While in this distressed state of mind, the Virginia Conference came on, and, unable to attend to business on account of the

anguish of his spirit, he went to Petersburg, the seat of the Conference. He had been converted only about nine months, and had no formal recommendation. The preachers and Presiding Elder, who knew him well, recommended him for admission on trial in the itinerant work. The Conference session was held with closed doors, and he seems not to have been aware of the result. At the close of the Conference, the doors were thrown open, and visitors entered the room—he among the rest. Bishop Asbury, after his usual concise and solemn address to the preachers, proceeded to read out the Appointments, and William McKendree was announced for Mecklenburg Circuit. This was certainly a summary process, for there is no evidence that he had either been recommended to the Conference by the Society, or licensed as a local preacher. And as he never located, he never was a local preacher.

After a severe mental struggle, and with many misgivings as to his call and fitness for the work, he determined to undertake it; and having resolved to make the attempt, with an humble and trembling heart he entered at once upon its duties. His name therefore appears for the first time in the General Minutes as having been “received on trial” in the Virginia Conference in 1788. The following is his own statement of his feelings at this period:

“I went immediately to the circuit to which I was appointed, relying more upon the judgment of experienced ministers in whom I confided than in any clear convictions of my call to the work; and

when I yielded to their judgment, I determined not to deceive them, but to retire so soon as I should be convinced that I was not called of God; and to conduct myself in such a manner that, if I failed, my friends might be satisfied it was not for want of effort on my part, but that their judgment was not well founded. This resolution supported me under many doubts and fears, for entering upon the work of a traveling preacher neither removed my doubts nor the difficulties that attended my labors. Sustained by a resolution to make a full trial, I resorted to fasting and prayer, and waited for the kind friends who had charge of me to dismiss me from the work. *But I waited in vain.* In this state of suspense my reasoning might have terminated in discouraging and ruinous conclusions, had I not been comforted and sustained by the manner my aged and experienced brethren received me, by the manifest presence of God in our meetings, and by communion with my Saviour in private devotion. In this way I became satisfied, at last, of my call to the ministry, and that I was moving in the line of duty."

The Rev. M. Thrift, of Petersburg, Virginia, among several incidents in the life of Mr. McKendree, with which he has kindly favored the writer, gives the following facts: "The first sermon ever preached by him was at the house of Robert Venable, in the county of Prince Edward. During his first year's labor, he was much depressed in spirits, and was on the point of relinquishing his work as an itinerant, but his friends—

and especially the Venables—encouraged him to go on. He was greatly beloved wherever he labored. One great cause why he obtained such a firm hold upon the affections of the people, was his mild and conciliating manners.”

James O’Kelly was his first Presiding Elder, and Philip Cox, who had the charge of the circuit, was his first colleague. Mr. Cox seems to have been an excellent man, and proved a great blessing to his less experienced associate. His piety, prudence, amiability, and perseverance were of inestimable importance in forming the habits and molding the character of his junior brother. He was fortunate also in having his first year’s work among such a community as he found on Mecklenburg Circuit.

The prominent members of the Church sympathized with him, esteemed him highly, and sustained him by their counsels and their prayers. His fears and doubts began gradually to subside. The conviction deepened in his mind that to preach the gospel was essential to his own happiness; and as he was constrained to believe that his efforts were crowned with the blessing of God in the conversion of souls, his feelings became much relieved as to his duty before the year closed.

The whole number of Methodists in America when Mr. McKendree joined them—white and colored—was only about twenty-five thousand. The following year (1788) added fifty per cent. to this number, giving the result of the glorious revival in Virginia. The number of preachers increased

nearly in the same proportion: forty-eight were admitted on trial at this Conference.

His first year's work closed. God had been with him, and his charge was reluctant to part with him. The agony of his mind was subsiding, the clouds were beginning to give place to sunshine, and his heart was becoming satisfied to work, and, if need be, to suffer and die in the Lord's vineyard.

Among the number admitted on trial with Mr. McKendree at the Conference in 1788, were Henry Burchett, Peter Massie, Valentine Cook, and John McGee; all of whom, like himself, were, in after years, laborers in the West. The *first* two, after having toiled and suffered for a few years in the western frontiers, died in the work—and died in great peace. The remains of the first repose in an old grave-yard, overgrown with briars and bushes, in the midst of a large field, about three miles below Nashville, Tennessee. Some kind hand erected a simple tomb-stone, and inscribed it with his initials. His biography says of him—and it is among the earliest found in the Minutes—"He was a gracious, happy, useful man, who freely offered himself for four years' service on the dangerous stations of Kentucky and Cumberland. He was one among the worthies who freely left ease, safety, and prosperity to seek after and suffer faithfully for souls. His meekness, love, labors, prayers, tears, sermons, and exhortations will not be soon forgotten." He died 1794.

Mr. Massie also died near Nashville, and his resting-place is about three miles south-west of that

city. After laboring faithfully in the ministry for three years, "he obtained what he desired—a sudden death—by falling from his seat," and immediately expiring. He was a deeply afflicted, devout, and useful man.

Valentine Cook, after traveling in the Virginia Conference several years, came to Kentucky, and was a remarkably devoted and useful preacher. He was a learned man—rather eccentric in his manners, mighty in the Scriptures, and labored extensively and very successfully in planting Methodism in the West. His memory is a sweet savor throughout the region of his labors. The author has reason to remember him, and to revere and love him. He sleeps in the soil of Kentucky.

John McGee was one of the principal instruments of the great revival of 1800 in the West, and was distinguished by his sternly simple manners, his purity of life, and the power of his appeals to the heart. He was father-in-law to Thomas Logan Douglass, and died at an advanced age, in Smith county, Tennessee, greatly and justly respected.

Such were the men with whom Mr. McKendree entered the ministry. That band, remarkable for their primitive simplicity of deportment, their gravity, zeal, and fidelity to their mission, have all passed away; their privations, toils, and persecutions are over. The battle was a hard one, but it is ended, and they have the victory which insures an eternity of bliss.

At the Virginia Conference, held in Petersburg, and which began April 20, 1789, Bishops Coke and

Asbury were both present. Mr. McKendree received his appointment to the Cumberland Circuit, with John Barker in charge as his colleague, and James O'Kelly for his Elder. His field of labor lay on James River, and principally in Washington county, Virginia. This seems to have been a very agreeable circuit, and he found here many kind friends, and was, generally, warmly received. But, as was customary at that period, he was taken from that circuit after he had been there six months, and was returned to Mecklenburg, the scene of his labors during the previous year. This fact is evidence of the error of the tradition which represents him as having been an unacceptable young preacher, inasmuch as his Presiding Elder would not have re-appointed him to the same field of labor, where he must have known he would not be well received, and consequently not useful.

We have, however, but little reliable information as to his course during this year. That he was a close and methodical student, punctual to all his engagements, and devoted to his work, none will doubt who knew him. With characteristic modesty, he confesses that he was not only treated with marked kindness by his charge, but that he "saw fruit of his labors." One important fact is clearly developed in his history: that during this year he became fully satisfied that it was his duty to preach the gospel, and that he dismissed all those harassing fears which had tormented his mind upon this subject. Henceforth we shall find him unreservedly and cheerfully giving all his energies of soul and

body to his holy vocation, until he "ceased at once to work and live."

The Conference was again held at Petersburg, in 1790, and began on the 14th of June. Here he was admitted into full connection, and ordained a deacon.* Mr. Asbury, in his Journal, says of this Conference: "All was peace until the Council was mentioned. The young men appeared to be entirely under the control of the Elders, and turned it out-of-doors. I was weary, and felt but little freedom to speak on the subject. This business is to be explained to every preacher; and then it must be carried through the Conferences twenty-four times—that is, through all the Conferences for two years."

The *Council* here alluded to had been originated

* The following is a copy of the original certificate of his ordination:

Know all Men by these Presents, That I Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, under the protection of Almighty GOD, and with a Single Eye to his Glory, by the Imposition of my Hands, and Prayer, did, on the day of the date hereof, set apart

William McKendree

for the office of a Deacon in the said Methodist Episcopal Church—a man whom we judge to be well qualified for that work; and do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a proper Person to administer the ordinance of Baptism, Marriage, and the Burial of the Dead, in the absence of an Elder; and to feed the Flock of Christ, so long as his Spirit and Practice are such as become the Gospel. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal, this fifteenth day of June,

One thousand seven hundred and ninety.

FRANCIS [seal] ASBURY.

the year before, and was designed as a remedy for two difficulties. 1. The great extension of the work rendered it quite inconvenient for *all* the preachers to meet together annually. 2. Each Conference claimed the right of a distinct and separate power, and regarded nothing as binding, except the ordination and stationing of the preachers, unless sanctioned by all the Conferences. The condition of the Conferences was somewhat similar to that which the several States of our Confederacy held to each other before the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The various Conferences, although allied to each other by agreement as to creed, and the moral and religious objects of Methodism, and also by recognizing the authority of the Bishops as chief pastors in conferring ordination and making the appointments, claimed and exercised supreme control upon all questions not expressly intrusted to the Bishops and the General Conference. As a matter of course, no rule or regulation affecting the general interests of the Church or the itinerancy could be made, changed, or repealed—nor could any new enterprise be attempted—until it had been agreed to and adopted by each Annual Conference. To avoid these serious inconveniences, and promote unity and efficiency, the plan was adopted to hold a *Council*, consisting of not less than nine, of which the Bishops and the Presiding Elders throughout the Connection should be members. This *General Council*, representing the whole work, was invested with “authority to mature every thing they shall judge expedient. 1.

To preserve the general union. 2. To render and preserve the external form of worship similar throughout the Connection. 3. To preserve the essentials of Methodist doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted. 4. To correct all abuses and disorders. And, lastly, to mature every thing they may see necessary for the good of the Church, and for promoting and improving our colleges and plan of education." This plan, in the absence of a delegated General Conference—which seems not yet to have been thought of—was certainly an improvement upon the state of things previously existing. But unfortunately there was a provision in the plan which not only required unanimity in the Council, but which, moreover, declared that "nothing so assented to by the Council shall be binding in any District until it has been agreed upon by a majority of the Conference held for that District." These provisions neutralized the utility of the whole arrangement. By requiring all the acts of the Council to be adopted by the District Conferences, nothing was gained, as to *time*, over the old system. And, as *unanimity* could scarcely be expected among so large a number of independent bodies, in reference to complicated measures connected with the interests of a Church spreading over the continent, there was likewise no increased security for the harmonious and effective coöperation of the whole body. The object of these unfortunate provisions was a laudable desire to maintain *Conference-rights*; but it was done at the sacrifice of union and energy. The manner by which the objects of its authors

was sought to be secured, rendered the plan liable to attacks, and exposed *them* to the shafts of the captious. As a political arrangement, it was a blunder—being not at all adapted to the necessities of the Church or the spirit of the times. It attempted to unite—without any sinister design on the part of its pure-minded advocates—the aristocratic with the most unlimited democratic element. A “*Maturing Council*,” composed of *Bishops* and *their appointees*, was the aristocratic principle—the purely democratic feature was found in the fact that each District Conference had an unqualified *veto* power. This plan might answer for the Independents, and for all who adopt the Congregational system of Church-government, but could only result in discord and disaster in a Church which seeks to accomplish the benevolent mission of Christianity by a concentration of her influence.

In justice to Mr. Asbury, and those who concurred with that sagacious and pure-hearted man in recommending this measure, it should be stated that at first all the Conferences received the plan with approbation, and under a different state of things, and with some modifications, it would have been a very useful arrangement; but after two years’ trial, it was abandoned by common consent.

The first session of this Council was held at Cokesbury, on the 1st of December, 1789, consisting of Richard Ivy, from Georgia; R. Ellis, South Carolina; E. Morris, North Carolina; Philip Bruce, Northern District of Virginia; James O’Kelly, Southern District of Virginia; L. Green, Ohio; Nel-

son Reid, Western Shore, Maryland; J. Everett, Eastern Shore; John Dickens, Pennsylvania; J. O. Cromwell, New Jersey; and Freeborn Garrettson, New York. Bishop Asbury says, "All our business was done in harmony and love." "The concerns of the college," "the printing business," "economy," "union," "funds for our suffering preachers on the western frontiers," etc., were subjects discussed and acted on at this meeting; and no doubt their action was wise and necessary. But alas! we have already seen how easily all their schemes were rendered abortive by the action of the Virginia Conference.

There is much significance in the laconic remark of Bishop Asbury, attributing the defeat of the "Council" to the influence of the Elders over the young preachers. We have already seen that Mr. James O'Kelly was a member of this Council, was present at its session, and sanctioned its suggestions. But, unfortunately for his reputation, as well as for the peace of the Church in Virginia, he had scarcely returned to his District before he changed his mind and began a course of systematic opposition. Whether this desertion of his colleagues, and, at first, covert war against the very measures he had sustained in the Council, resulted from a conviction of their impropriety, or of opposition to the Council itself, or (which is more probable still) from jealousy of Bishop Asbury's growing influence, coupled with an inordinate thirst for popularity, must be left to the decision of the reader. But certainly his subsequent conduct

exhibits him in a very questionable light. If opposed to the *principle* involved in the organization of the Council, he had time and opportunities enough to form and express his convictions, without subjecting himself to the charge of gross inconsistency. If his objections were founded on the *acts* of the Council, he should have opposed them in the session of the Council, where one dissent would have defeated them. But we are constrained to the conclusion that other and less worthy motives dictated his factious course. He may not have been fully aware of the secret springs of his feelings and actions at the beginning of his defection, but charity itself, although it can "cover a multitude of sins," can scarcely be so blind as not to perceive that his course is irreconcilable with candor and Christian integrity.

He was an old preacher, of fine talents, and wielded a great influence over the younger preachers. He had evidently laid the train for the ruin of Bishop Asbury's favorite plan, and the explosion began at this Conference. This was, however, but the beginning—the end is not yet.

At the Conference of 1790, Mr. McKendree was appointed to Portsmouth Circuit, with Jesse Nicholson for his colleague, and James O'Kelly for his Elder. His narrative of this year's work, of his transfer to Surry Circuit, and of the pleasure and spiritual profit he enjoyed, have been stated in his letter to Bishop Asbury.

The Diary of Mr. McKendree, which now lies before the writer, begins May 7, 1790.

To those who recollect the manners of Mr. McKendree after he became a bishop, it may be surprising to learn that one who was usually placid, so philosophically self-possessed and bland, whether in the parlor, the pulpit, or in the chair, was remarkable for the austerities which he imposed upon himself, and the fervor, almost verging upon excessive enthusiasm, which marked his early ministerial history. A few quotations from his Diary are given, not certainly to condemn, but to illustrate truthfully the depth and earnestness of his piety and zeal:

"Friday, May 7, 1790.—This being fast-day—a day I much delight in, because it is a day on which Jesus often feeds my soul—I rose early, while it was yet dark, and went into the field for prayer and meditation—returned to the house, and after family prayer, sat down closely to reading, writing, and prayer. The day proved very rainy. I have no watch; and having risen so early, and a few persons having come too soon, we mistook the time of day, and began the meeting: a precious meeting we had indeed." This meeting, it seems, was held in a private house, and after they had closed the exercises, and had waited an hour or two, and "just as dinner was set, the people began to come to meeting." Mortified at his mistake, but not discouraged, he postponed the dinner-arrangements, and proceeded to hold another meeting. This seems to have been the better of the two, for he adds, "The great Jehovah poured heaven all over us, until I, as well as the rest, was filled, overrun," etc., etc.

"*Saturday, 8th.*—Deep solemnity and heart-agony rested on me. O how I pant after more of God! Went to meeting; found very few; spoke from, '*O Absalom, my son, my son!*' etc. Felt like I wanted to send 'rivers of tears' to the ends of the earth; returned and went into the preacher's room, and Jesus met me. All my sorrow was emptied into his bosom, and I had access to a throne of grace." Having gone into the woods on that afternoon to read and pray in solitude, he says, "My heart burned, but this did not suffice. I tried this way, and that, until at last I got into an agony of prayer. O agony! O pain!—O sweet pain! O how the flesh dreads agonizing prayer! But I am convinced there is no getting nigh nor keeping close to God without it."

"*Sunday, 9th.*—Had a comfortable time in the morning, and set off with some brethren to love-feast at Brother Young's meeting-house; had sweet, refreshing showers by the way; got within a few miles, and saw such numbers on the way, and the road so trodden, I felt an awe; and Satan offered me a temptation, but I absolutely refused to receive it; turned into the woods, and in a beautiful valley fell at Jesus' feet. He opened heaven, and filled my soul with such victorious joys, that the fear of men and of devils vanished. As I stepped into the door, I felt like God was there," etc. "At night had prayer-meeting—a time of the Lord's power—Christians shouting, and my soul delighted," etc. "Went to bed about 11 o'clock. The Lord waked me, as usual; regardless of interrupting preachers

or people, I praised the Lord, and went to bed again." This is an allusion to his habit of rising from his bed every night for devotion.

"*Monday, 10th.*—Waked at the break of day; addressed the throne of grace; went over a quarter of a mile to a fine stream, and listened to the murmuring waters, and singing birds; sent a volley of praise to Jesus, with strong cries for such things as I stood in need of. Began searching my heart by the following questions:

"1. For what have I left dear parents, family connections, and all that is dear to me? *Ans.* Not for applause, nor money, nor yet to spread my name, nor for any sinister view; but 1. For peace to my soul; 2. To obey God; without which I cannot keep peace; and, 3. If by any means I may be helpful to sinners in my generation.

"2. Why do you exert yourself in reading, praying, and meditating so much? *Ans.* Not to merit heaven, nor to recommend me to God's favor, nor yet 'to be seen of men;' but to become more and more acquainted with the word of God, and the Spirit of God.

"3. How long do you intend to stand it? *Ans.* *As long as I breathe.*"

On the 18th, Mr. O'Kelly came to his appointment, and preached for him; and from the following remarks in his Diary, no doubt Mr. O'Kelly endeavored privately, and under the guise of confidence, to weaken his attachments to Mr. Asbury and the government of the Church. He wrote thus:

“But, poor preachers! when they come together, and begin to unbosom themselves, and look into their distresses, there is grief indeed! Such a time of trouble I have not felt. *Heavy clouds rising; thunder begins to rumble, and lightning flash: such gloomy prospects I never saw before,*” etc.

What a pity that one so pure and artless should be brought under the influence of a jealous, sour, intriguing old preacher! Here is more of it:

“*Wednesday, 19th.*—Brother O’Kelly preached again: surely, the greatest sermon I ever heard. The dear old man got his *bitter cup* sweetened, and his soul inflamed. This evening the preachers got together again, and the *griefs returned again*: went to bed *sorrowful.*”

Yes, here is an elder poisoning the minds of the young preachers against Mr. Asbury, and other holy men, assuming extraordinary piety and love for Methodism, leading these unsuspecting souls to regard Mr. Asbury as despotic and mercenary, and plotting the overthrow of the very system for which he had lately voted in Council. What a Presiding Elder! A wolf in charge of lambs!

On Thursday, June 10th, he took leave of his charge, and started for Conference; met with Mr. O’Kelly, and continued with him to Petersburg. On the way, fell in company with a good many of his brethren going to Conference. Of course, Mr. O’Kelly could not lose so good an opportunity to carry out his miserable designs. Here is the indication of it:

“*Friday, 11th.*—Brother O’Kelly preached from

Rom. xi. 33. We had great preaching, but not so happy a time as I have seen ; here met with several other preachers ; went on after preaching, twelve or fifteen miles, to Brother P.'s. *Had some weighty matters brought before us,*" etc.

Who doubts but the "weighty matters brought before" them were presented by the *Elder*? that the object was to afflict and depreciate Bishop Asbury, and the old preachers who agreed with him, by "throwing out of doors" at the ensuing Conference the recommendations of "the Council?" This is the way the elders got the "control of the young preachers." What a lesson does the subsequent history of this man teach to ecclesiastical demagogues ! Let young preachers beware of such men.

The following extract may be interesting as illustrative of early Conference scenes :

"*Monday, June 14, 1790.* — Got to Petersburg ; found Conference sitting,* and the young preachers going through their examination ; and to my comfort heard eighteen or twenty received without a blemish, after standing their time of probation. In the evening, Bishop Asbury read his letters from different quarters, which gave accounts of the great work of God going on. The Lord made it a time of sweetness and power to us in general. At the

* This Conference was most probably held in a private house, as I learn by a letter from the late A. Dibrell, dated Norfolk, Virginia, Jan. 26, 1855, that "Bishop McKendree was ordained deacon in the house of Mr. Gressett Davis—the house now occupied by his daughter, Mrs. Follett. There was at that time no Methodist Church in Petersburg."

adjourning of the Conference, Mr. Jarratt, an Episcopalian preacher, who was with us, went to prayer, and a time of shouting we had."

"*Thursday, second day of Conference.*—We had a precious time in the morning. Mr. Jarratt preached at 11 o'clock. After preaching, seventeen preachers, being elected, were called, and presented to the Bishop to be ordained *deacons*. Such a sight I never saw before. It was a solemn time indeed, and seemed to affect the extensive congregation. For my own part, I think I was never thus affected before. Felt fresh desires and stronger resolutions than ever I experienced before to live to God altogether. The world this day seemed to be left very far behind, and my soul encompassed with light."

His parchment, signed by Bishop Asbury, dated June 15, 1790, certifies that he was *one* of these seventeen; although, from an excess of modesty, he does not say so. "*A solemn time, indeed!*" Doubtless it was peculiarly so to him. It was the hour of his public consecration to the ministry, and of the irrevocable vow of self-dedication to the "one work" of saving souls. The impression of that hour never was erased—that solemn vow never violated. Like Wesley, Coke, and Asbury, he gave *all* his time and energies, to his latest hour, to that most noble of all works.

The Conference over, Mr. McKendree started immediately to his new field of labor, and reached it in time to fill the first appointment—Sunday, June 20th. Notwithstanding the length of the extracts already given from his Journal, we must give

one or two more in this connection, as evincing his course during this year.

“Saturday, 26th.—Awoke this morning at my usual time, and found myself much disordered; thought it was prudent to indulge my debilitated body with ‘a little more sleep, and a little more slumber.’ But I soon found a fire shut up in my bones struggling for vent. I sprang up, fell on my knees, and Jesus answered, ‘Here am I.’ I read five chapters on my knees (as usual) with deliberation, and in deep meditation, praying for every five verses, and found heaven all around me. I was made so sensible of God’s goodness that I sunk into nothing before him, and every breath and thought seemed to be prayer or praise; could scarcely help from bursting into open praise before my strange brethren. My heart melted like wax, and my soul was overwhelmed with gratitude.”

In the evening, after Brother Nicholson had preached for him, he says:

“We went on the sea-shore. So noble a scene never before saluted my eyes! As I approached the foaming, raging sea, I observed the waves had their ‘bounds,’ and their Almighty Creator was presented to my mind. I cried out, Who would refuse to worship such a God as this? All earthly objects appear small, except such as raise great thoughts about God.”

The incidents noted in his Journal, under date of June 30th, present a new phase in his character, and evince that he possessed both physical and moral courage.

“*Wednesday, 30th.*—Had three hard places to preach at, where there are no societies. The second, only last Sabbath, produced hundreds of hearers; some drunk, some cursing and swearing, and others offering the preacher grog; while he was—as he said—on his best behavior, for fear of a whipping. This set me all on fire—felt as though a whipping, *for Christ’s sake*, would be sweet, with faithful dealing with such rebels. I went, and out they came. Nobody said to me, ‘Alight,’ ‘Come in the house,’ or ‘Sit down;’ (it was a private dwelling-house.) I went right in, put down my things; fixed the table to stand by. I felt a fire in my bones, and began preaching from Luke xvi. 23, ‘And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.’ They seemed to hear with great attention. I did not spare them in the least—many deep sighs mixed with tears. A cloud came up, and it began to thunder fearfully. I claimed the thunder for *my* God, and bid defiance to every other power—daring the rebels then to say one word. The Lord made it his time to pierce many of their hard hearts. I came off clear—rode through the rain, rejoicing, to Cross Roads, and rested from my labors.”

One or two more extracts from his Journal will suffice for the present.

“*Monday, July 5th.*—Sprung from bed at the crack of day, when all lay sleeping around me. Hurried away with my Bible to the open fields, overspread with the curtains of heaven, and prostrated myself before the Deity. Felt less than nothing; wrestled in prayer; run through the fields of meditation;

read ten chapters on my knees, praying fervently every five verses. The Lord bowed the heavens, and came down to visit me—poured out salvation until my soul was *fully* delighted," etc.

"*Saturday, 10th.*—The attributes of the Lord, the providence of God, all the holy angels and the myriad prayers of thousands of saints are my friends, and on my side. Storms and calms, pain and ease, persecution and prosperity, life and death—you all belong to me through Jesus Christ. Glory, hallelujah! Jesus is my beloved. Enough, enough! What can daunt my soul when Jesus says, 'Go'? I'll 'run to and fro' at his command, in ease or pain, and count the sufferings of this life not worth mentioning in comparison of the transcendent glories to be revealed."

And so he did run until he found that glory.

CHAPTER V.

Extracts from his *Diary*—Preaches two hours—Vessels in a gale—Feels like a wanderer—Conversions—Preaches in the open air—In Portsmouth and Norfolk—Bands—Very busy—Children's class—Duty to baptized children—Self-dedication—Emancipation—Is changed to another circuit—"Power"—Good-breeding—New circuit—His course of life.

As the leading object of this biography is to give a full and faithful portraiture of this honored and excellent minister of God, no apology can be necessary for quoting so frequently from his *Diary*. It would be an unpardonable display of vanity if the writer were to substitute his own description of the man for the intellectual and moral daguerreotype which his own writings furnish us. We quote his *Diary* again :

"*Thursday, 15th.*—Feel so little and mean. I go through a round of duties, but with so little life, I blush and ask pardon. Rode fifteen miles—found a large congregation; preached *two* hours, and thought the time short. The word had a sweet effect. Went into class-meeting; the people pressed up-stairs and begged to be permitted to come in; had a good time—several joined the Church."

The next sentence reveals the fact that, even at that time, he was subject to a determination of

blood to his brain, which, in the decline of life, often afflicted him so much as to disqualify him for any mental or physical labor: "Was obliged to go to bed before the meeting was over; ate no dinner; kept my bed until night; was bled, and found some relief." This indisposition continued several days, although he was able to attend his appointments, and had some refreshing meetings.

"*Monday, 19th.*—Preached at Annapolis to an attentive people. After meeting, took myself to solitude; found much sweet communion with the Lord on a river bank; wrestled in prayer; reading and meditating, the place became awful. A heavy cloud arose very hastily; the waves ran high; vessels hove in sight under furlled sails; I sat and looked on: never in my life did the great Jehovah appear so awfully powerful; my soul shuddered. But in the midst, his providential care filled me with praise. The rain and clouds soon obscured the view; I returned to the house and cast myself at Jesus' feet in prayer. During the balance of the day I found continual peace in my soul—although I mourn on account of my little progress in the divine life, and see so few souls getting converted. Lord, revive thy work! 'Turn again our captivity, O Lord, and we will praise thee!'"

The next quotation indicates a state of feeling in which many itinerant preachers can sympathize. He was a wanderer from home and loved friends for Christ's sake. Like his great Master and prototype, "he had not where to lay his head." The morally sublime and benevolent object of his mis-

sion was not always appreciated by those for whose salvation he labored. And even when the melancholy feeling arising from a sense of dependence among strangers, which he here expresses, may have been groundless as regards the hospitable disposition of the people, yet how natural and pardonable the emotion !

“*Tuesday, 20th.*—Find myself still very poorly and in much pain, yet I must go on, for I have no place to rest my aching head. Ye sweet birds, sing on ; make your nests and raise your young in peace ; but I am beholden to others for a place of shelter and rest. Rejoice, ye foxes ; sport, ye active lambs ; the God of nature smiles upon you.” But sensible that such a strain of feelings may easily mislead him, he checks them by adding, “Beware of reasoning with Satan !

O faithless soul to reason thus,
And murmur without end !
Did Christ expire upon the cross,
And is *he* not your friend ?
Your Saviour is your real friend
To tell your secrets to,
On his advice you may depend
In every thing you do.

Found a large congregation—lifted my heart to Jesus ; he answered. In the beginning it was painful to speak, but I soon got well. The power of the Lord came down—the word was like fire among the people : some that never heard a Methodist before, (as I was informed,) sunk to the floor and cried for mercy. God bless these yielding sinners ! If I

go among them, they crowd around me to see who can talk to me. Fourteen mourners on the floor, and two sprung to life! At night the people thronged out, and among the rest a bitter enemy of the Methodists. The Lord poured out his Spirit. Just as I began to exhort, one was converted and sprung up; a shout bursted in the congregation, I turned round, and caught the old persecutor in my arms. I called upon him to repent, and told him he would be damned if he did not."

"*Wednesday, 21st.*—So many people came to meeting, I was compelled to take my stand under a tree in the open air. About the middle of the sermon, one fell to the ground. It was a solemn time; joined ten in Society. Although no appointment had been made for meeting, I was astonished to see a large house crowded with people after dark. I risked my health, preached, and found the Lord as evidently present as perhaps I ever did in my life. The God of Elijah answers by fire! Two souls sprung into life—one backslider professed to be reclaimed, and others lay almost like dead men. This being a new preaching-place, the people were amazed, and gazed as if they saw wonders."

The next three days he spent in Portsmouth and Norfolk, attending class-meetings, and preaching when well enough to do so, but still laboring under debility and pain. Mention is made of Brother Nicholson in Portsmouth, and Martin in Norfolk, as preachers in charge of these places. In the former place he became acquainted with a Brother

George, and "found him and his family very kind and pious."

"*Tuesday*, 27th, and *Wednesday*, 28th.—A little comforted in meeting, but generally feel much backwardness to my duty, which is painful to me—but not half painful enough. Lord, increase my faith, inflame my desires; like a mighty magnet draw my whole nature toward thee, that I may run after thee in full stretch, with an earnest and expanded heart, and take the kingdom of heaven by humble violence! Amen, amen."

"*Thursday*, 29th.—O, this leanness! and the worst of all is, I am too contented in it, and too much at ease. O Lord, pour fire into my soul, and heart, and bones! Shut it up there until every power is inflamed! Let me wrestle, and fight, and die, rather than sink into a formal spirit of religion!"

The next quotation is a characteristic one:

"*Monday*, 2d.—Rest-day; arose early; applied myself closely to study. There are several persons present with whom I have been in company for several days, and have endeavored to provoke them to good works; I hope I have succeeded. Last evening I formed five bands, one of which wept over their leanness, and started with renewed zeal. This morning, at breakfast, they told me they rose at midnight, walked a mile, and held a band-meeting, while I lay asleep. I stood confounded and ashamed."

The following extract from his Diary, dated Thursday, Aug. 4, 1790, illustrates the character of our fathers in the itinerancy, and the secret of their success :

"Rose early; poured out my soul in prayer and praise; rode to Portsmouth; met the other preacher, and at twelve o'clock met class; had a comfortable time. Rode into the country and preached at four o'clock P.M. The power of the Lord was amongst the people; deep solemnity rested on the whole congregation; about twelve or fifteen down crying for mercy. One was converted, and appeared to be as happy as a creature can be. Returned to town, preached at eight o'clock, and went to rest at half-past ten o'clock, much fatigued in body, but with perfect calmness of soul."

Again he writes, "*Friday, 5th.*—Set out soon; rode twenty-five miles; preached, met class, *and classed seventeen children.*"

How suggestive is the closing remark! And may not the inquiry be both pertinent and important just here, whether, as Methodists, and especially as Methodist preachers, we are doing our whole duty to our children? Sunday-schools have done much for them; but ought not the children of our people to be placed more fully under the pastoral oversight of our preachers in charge? Should they not form children's classes, meet them regularly, instruct, exhort, and pray with and for them? So did young McKendree. Is it not time we were all awake to the importance of this work? Christ loves "the little children"—is angry at those who forbid their coming to him—says he is their King, and his kingdom is composed of, or belongs to, such—for "of such is the kingdom of heaven"—presents them as models to which adults must be assimilated,

that they may enter the kingdom—thus recognizing their right to the privileges of citizenship in his kingdom, and of their eternal salvation except upon a forfeiture of these blessings. Thus *we* understand the great Master; so the great body of the *Christian Church* understood him down to the Reformation. Hence the undisputed recognition of their right to baptism by the early Church.

And now, we baptize them, and have done with them! Surely a good shepherd will take care of the lambs of his flock. Christ's lambs should have our care.

On Saturday, Aug. 28th, after preaching and attending the burial of a friend, he received a packet of letters, and among them was one from "a friend," which seems to have excited him greatly. Whatever may have been the design of this communication, it became a *spur* to his devotional feelings, and called forth the following strong expressions of renewed dedication of himself to the service of God:

"I feel fresh courage; the '*spur*' provokes (*i. e.*, excites) me; heaven allures me—the Father draws, and Jesus bids me come. And what shall prevent? Shall tribulation, affliction, or persecution? No. Is any thing too much to give up, or too dear to part from? Shall chief friends or near connections stay me? No. Shall honor or pleasure? I spurn them. Shall the riches of Peru or the gold of Ophir be thought equal to thine eternal love, O Lord? And, with all the rest, I cheerfully make the surrender of soul, flesh, and blood, and, at thy command, father and mother, brothers and sisters,

houses and lands, and *the yoke broke*, and the *oppressed go free*. And my life, adorable Jesus, is at thy disposal! All these do I view as valueless when they rise between thee and me. And now, O Lord God Almighty, grant me one request, for Christ's sake; give me grace; give me power cheerfully to leave them all at thy command."

Two remarks, suggested by the above quotation, may not be considered inappropriate:

1. Without a frequent and solemn reconsecration of himself and of *all he has* to the service of God, no preacher is fitted for his holy work.

2. There is doubtless an inkling of his feelings on the subject of *emancipation* in the above phrase, "*The yoke broke—the oppressed go free.*"

Mr. McKendree, in common with the whole body of his colleagues in the Methodist ministry, and perhaps in the membership, was doubtless sternly opposed to the African slave-trade, then carried on extensively. The feelings of Mr. Wesley and of Dr. Coke were well understood upon this subject. Humanity shuddered at the injustice and cruelty connected with it. South Carolina, while a British province, passed an act prohibiting the farther importation of slaves, but Great Britain rejected it. The province of Virginia repeatedly remonstrated with the crown of England against it, and begged its discontinuance, but British selfishness protected the traffic, and, assisted by New England, carried it on, until the South was filled with captured Africans.*

* The colony of Virginia, beginning as far back as 1699, passed twenty-three acts to repress the slave-trade.

In her petition to the British throne in 1772, the following language is used :

“We are encouraged to look up to the throne and implore your Majesty’s paternal assistance in averting a calamity of the most alarming nature. The importation of slaves into the colonies from the coast of Africa, hath long been considered a trade of *great inhumanity*; and under its present encouragement, we have too much reason to fear, will endanger the very existence of your Majesty’s American dominions.

“Deeply impressed with these sentiments, we most humbly beseech your Majesty to *remove all those restraints on your Majesty’s governors of this colony, which inhibit their assenting to such laws which might check so very pernicious a commerce.*”

These petitions availed nothing. The reply which had been made to South Carolina—that *the slave-trade was beneficial and necessary to the mother country*, and which was given to the attempts to abolish the trade in Jamaica in 1765, and repeated in 1774—that “we cannot allow the colonies to check or discourage a traffic so beneficial to the nation”—seems to have been the settled policy of England up to the period of our Revolution. Indeed, “the inhuman use of the royal negative” against the action of the colonies, upon this subject, is specified in the very first clause of the original Virginia Constitution, as a reason of her separation from the mother country; and the first Assembly after the adoption of the Constitution prohibited the traffic.

Nor let it be forgotten that the United States Government interdicted the trade from her ports thirteen years before Great Britain did—that she made it punishable as a crime seven years before, and that she fixed the period of non-importation while Britain was still allowing and encouraging it in her colonies; and that Northern ships and capital were deeply interested in the trade. Thus to Old England and New England the South almost wholly owed her slaves, and but for Southern opposition to their “capture” and the horrors of “the middle passage,” the African slave-trade would not have been so soon abolished.

Sympathizing with the prevailing feeling upon this subject, Mr. McKendree was decidedly opposed to the slave-trade. Humanity and religion branded it as cruel and odious. Mr. Wesley, and all the early preachers whom he sent to America, were conscientiously and openly in opposition, both to the “trade” and the relation of slavery. The number of slaves then in the colonies was comparatively small, and it was thought their emancipation was practicable; hence, under those influences, many Methodists in the slave regions felt constrained to evince their sense of the injustice of capturing and enslaving the unfortunate Africans by emancipating all they owned. In this way thousands were restored to nominal freedom. As the number of slaves increased, and the difficulties of the effort became more and more evident, this first strong emotion was, in a degree, repressed, by reflecting upon the impossibility of restoring

them to their native home, in Africa; the miseries which such a restoration would involve, their incapacity for the enjoyment of the rights of freemen here, and the degradation and wretchedness of those upon whom the experiment had been tried. Public sentiment thus gradually settled down in the unwelcome conviction that the relation was inevitable; and thus thousands who viewed the acts of their capture and deportation with horror, and who would have done any thing practicable to prevent their introduction into America, finding the question of their emancipation a problem for which no feasible solution had been presented by statesmen and philanthropists, came to the conclusion that, to those necessarily involved in the relation of masters, the wiser and better plan was to treat them with humanity, give them the advantages of the gospel, and await the developments of Providence.

Many, however, not so familiar with the difficulties which environ the subject, and impelled by their sympathies, continued to advocate emancipation at whatever risks to society and to the slaves themselves. Their consciences were implicated, and they felt they must bear their testimony against "the evils of slavery"—forgetting that to modify and control an evil, and to make it conduce to good, is, in some cases, the best and only safe remedy for it.

We have no wish to conceal the fact that Mr. McKendree, at this period of his life, and for many years afterward, was opposed both to slavery and the slave-trade. Nor do we pretend that he was

ever the advocate of the one or the other. He was too intimately acquainted with the delicate and dangerous nature of the subject, too wise and prudent, and withal, loved both his country and the whole Church too much to become, at any period of his life, a public and violent agitator of this question. He was opposed to becoming the owner of slaves, and no doubt would have set them free if his father had given him any. When he wrote the words quoted above, doubtless he was at heart an *emancipationist*, as were most of his colleagues and friends. He was such upon principle; and if maturer years, more extended observation, and a riper judgment, effected any change in his views and feelings upon the subject, which is said and believed to have been the case, such a change implied nothing inconsistent with the purest and most disinterested emotions of Christian philanthropy. It was not that he loved the slave less, or less detested the slave-trade, or that he was more a friend of slavery, but that he became more sensible of the fact that the highest interests of all concerned made it his duty to refrain from the agitation of the question. Nothing is more evident than that in his later years the agitation of this subject in the Church deeply disquieted and distressed his heart. Slavery, he regarded, as it existed in the South, an infinitely less evil than civil war and ecclesiastical strife. He was born and brought up amidst slaves; his parents and all his nearest kindred were owners of them. He had witnessed the growth of the slave population, had seen the effects of slavery, and of emanci-

pation, both in the free and the slave States; every plan which human ingenuity had devised for "the extirpation of the great evil of slavery," he had duly considered; and with his ample sources of information, he came to the conclusion that under his surroundings it was best for *him*, in view of all the difficulties and dangers involved, to let the subject alone, except in so far as he was bound by the word of God to insist upon the duties pertaining to the relation of both the master and the slave. As an evidence of the modification of his sentiments on this question, by more extended observation, when his growing infirmities rendered it necessary that he should have a servant to attend upon him, he consulted with his friends, the Rev. Dr. A. L. P. Green and Mr. Elijah Boddie, about the propriety of purchasing a servant for this purpose; but they dissuaded him from it, and he dropped the subject.

Justice to him demands that we add, that since our acquaintance with him began, until his death, he was the fast friend of colonization—not with the expectation that by this means they would all be speedily transferred to Africa, but that the free colored people might find a congenial home, and become instrumental in evangelizing their fatherland.

Such was the consistent course of the man whose early Diary we are tracing, and which closes his account of himself, August 28, 1790, with these characteristic remarks:

"I enjoy the testimony of an inoffensive con-

science; and this is my continual rejoicing, 'that in simplicity and godly sincerity I have had my conversation in the world.' "

Having been directed by his Presiding Elder to exchange work with another preacher, he notices the fact in his Diary, and confesses his reluctance to do so, because of the strong mutual attachment which knit him and his charge together. To one so constitutionally modest and retiring as he was known to be, and as he was to a peculiar degree in his early ministry, it must ever have been an affliction to leave a devoted circle of friends and brethren, and go amidst strangers. Yet he hesitated not—it was the custom of the times, and he was not a man likely to innovate the rules he had promised to keep, nor to claim a personal exemption from a common duty.

"*Sunday, Aug. 29, 1790.*—With a heaven of peace in my soul, I preached at B. Meeting-house, from Prov. i. 12–26. The power of the Lord came upon me, and his word was like fire shut up in my bones. Some hard hearts trembled; others ran from the power. This is the way the devil keeps possession of the people here: as soon as the power is displayed, he leads the sinners off. I went after them, but they bristled up in a bunch and opposed and condemned the work. I reasoned with them until they were softened, and begged them, if they condemned me, at any rate to spare the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus Christ. I then drew vouchers from the Scriptures, which made them look about. I farther said, You think I am wrong, and I think you are

not right; but God knows who is right, and he will presently judge us all—and I know Jesus is in my soul. I then began to shout, and they turned pale, kindly shook my hand, and bade me God-speed.”

God forbid that the time shall ever occur in the history of Methodism when the preachers shall cease to feel the holy fire which glowed in the heart of young McKendree, or become ashamed to defend the work of the Holy Spirit! Should such, unfortunately, ever take place, then, however learned and eloquent they may be, however numerous, rich, and respectable our membership may become, the “*power*” will depart from us, revivals cease, and the divine Shekinah will no longer gleam upon our altar. God of our fathers, give us poverty, reproach, and persecution, rather than this! Take not from us an earnest, spiritual, and faithful ministry, with those demonstrations of our divine calling which our fathers enjoyed in the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers! Let thy “*power*” abide with us to the end of time!

Omitting to notice the details of the succeeding week, as given in his Diary, evincing constant toil and much holy joy, we anxiously follow him to his new field of labor. Here is his account of his introduction to his new charge:

“*Sunday, Sept. 5, 1790.*—Took my new circuit, at N. Tavern—preached to a pretty serious and attentive people, but strangers to me. After meeting I felt, for a little while, like I must make application for

some place to lay my head; but before I did so, a very genteel person stepped forward and gave me an invitation. I thankfully accepted the offer, and soon found it was to a lawyer's—one of the first families. The sweetness of this people's spirit has entirely won me. I am more than ever convinced that good-breeding is an accomplishment next to grace. Instead of leaving the room to avoid the presence of the preacher, they give me their company when I can spare time from retirement, and introduce subjects for conversation which interest and instruct. Indeed, they so won my affection that when I took my evening walk, I felt deeply engaged for them, and cried out, 'O Lord, give me this people!' O that I may meet every member of this precious family in the kingdom of glory! Amen."

This was a very good beginning, and the new circuit seems to have been one of more refinement and intelligence than the old one. Will our youthful soldier find himself relaxing in self-denial, simplicity, and zeal, now that he is mingling with the more polished and wealthy portion of society? What happened to the victorious followers of Hannibal after the battle of Cannæ, has often since occurred to the young soldier of the cross, and hundreds of preachers who had won favor by their zeal, simplicity, and devotion to their Master, have been ruined by prosperity, smiles, and flattery. Not such, however, was his fate—the secret of his strength in resisting these influences will be found in the divine grace which he sought with great hu-

mility and constant self-denial, and in his unceasing labors in the ministry.

The succeeding week, he seems to have suffered a good deal from an attack of fever and ague; but on Monday, Sept. 13th, he resumes his Diary:

“Remained poorly, but traveled and strove to preach—have had lovely meetings—Christians in a flame. My exercises have been various. I want to serve God with all my soul, and dedicate all my gifts and substance to the Lord. But O, I do often see and feel my failures, and set out afresh to amend; yet have to mourn that I am not what I ought to be! My example is not so reserved and holy as it ought to be! How unbecoming for a Christian, especially a Christian minister, to laugh! O Lord, thou that seest me now while writing, and knowest how I want to love thee with all my heart, and serve thee with all my strength, pardon my misgivings, pity my weaknesses, and graciously restore me to the strength of ‘a perfect man in Christ Jesus’! Endear thyself to me, O Lord, until I shall be inflamed with love, and be ready to lay down my life for thee at any time! Lord grant it! Amen.”

Let his sons in the gospel read and consider the following language in his Diary, dated Thursday, Sept. 16, 1790:

“Preached—much life and activity in religion, and pressed the subject of holiness with much diligence. Some proclaimed their fresh resolutions to go forward, and acknowledged former backslidings. I felt the weight of St. Paul’s language, lest after ‘I have preached to others, I

myself should be a castaway.' O what dangers I see in a preacher's resting in merely talking about and pressing it upon others, and yet, for want of spiritual exertions and repeated fastings, he may be losing the power of religion in his own soul! O Lord, while I minister to others, I pray thee give me to eat and live of 'the things of the altar,' lest I die! 1 Cor. ix. 13."

Daily self-denial, frequent, fervent, and protracted prayer, "in fastings often," "preaching the word in season and out of season," reproving, rebuking, exhorting, as "need required and occasion was given," combined with a constant study of the Bible and devout meditation, were the means by which our fathers in the ministry "wrought wonders." Their preaching was plain and in faith: they *felt* the force of the momentous truths which they uttered. They *realized* the presence of God, and *expected* the aid of the Holy Spirit to attend the divinely-appointed means. They looked for *present* effects, and they were not disappointed. Sinners were convicted and converted under the word, and the lukewarm and self-satisfied were stimulated to seek for holiness. God honored the men, by giving them the signs and seal of his favor, who honored him by their confidence in his truth and power. So it has ever been, and so it will be to the end of time.

We give the following quotation as another instance of the course he pursued:

"*Saturday*, Sept. 18th.—Rose early. After morning devotion and family prayer, I returned to

my room and read five chapters in Deuteronomy on my knees, praying fervently, every five verses, for the Spirit and life of the word. Precious and awful meditations rolled through my mind. I turned my eyes, and behold, all under the sun is 'vanity;' hence the conclusion that true religion and good health are the greatest blessings on earth." He adds, at the close of the day, "This being *watch-night*, and having to watch alone, I went to my room. After prayers for the *band-connection*, fell to reading the 'Saints' Rest;' and really, before I got through the account of 'the hinderances to heavenly-mindedness,' my heart ached. I wrestled and begged the Lord for power over my last enemy. I mourned my time out, and went to bed pained and distressed for more of God."

The reader doubtless understands, here, the allusions to the *band-society*, and the custom of its members to pray for each other at stated times, and also to the *watch-night* usage, which required its members to devote the night—at least until after twelve o'clock—to devotion.

CHAPTER VI.

McKendree's Diary—Fasting—Reproof—Mr. O'Kelly attacks the Council—His course—Itinerancy—Tobacco—Preparation for preaching—Selecting and changing texts—Different kinds of style—The kind for the pulpit—O'Kelly's Convention—The regular Council—Mr. Asbury gives it up—McKendree visits his father—Meets Bishop Asbury—Is delighted—Mr. Wesley's death—Dr. Coke goes to England—McKendree ordained elder Dec. 25, 1791.

As the Diary of Mr. McKendree embraces but a short period of his useful life, and may be interesting and edifying to many of our readers, we subjoin farther extracts :

“ *Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1790.*—Early in the morning, spent an hour on my knees in fervent prayer, reading God's word, and praising my adorable Saviour. It was a time of heavenly joys to my soul. From ten o'clock A.M. to half-past one o'clock, I spent in a lonely, awful swamp, in wrestling, agonizing prayer. But surely God and his holy ones were all around me, heaven burst into my bosom, and glory filled my soul.”

Again: “O how sweet is Christian fellowship below! Blessed be God for the uniting spirit of love I feel to Jesus and his people! O blessed be God that ever he formed a militant Church! Glory

to his name that he ever received such a poor unworthy worm as I into his Church-privileges! How I am blessed! 'I had rather be a *door-keeper* in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness'—that I would."

The practice of *fasting* at regular periods, it is feared, is, like some other very excellent usages among the old Methodists, becoming less strictly observed of late than formerly. Then the habit, among the preachers especially, was to fast every Friday—some added Tuesday—and those who were too feeble to fast throughout the entire day, abstained until evening. The quarterly fasts were kept by all the members. Mr. McKendree was punctual and rigid in all these observances. Hence he says:

"*Friday*, Sept. 24th.—Having to ride fifteen miles and preach, I had some temptations to breakfast, but resisted them; and though I suffered on account of abstinence, yet the cross vanished, and I suffered less than usual on my fast-days. Praise and power, honor and glory to God! He has not forgotten to be gracious, but made one in our midst. The meeting lasted four hours, when one of the mourners sprang up, praising God for snatching him as 'a brand from the burning.' O how like heaven is the place where God revives his work!"

Sunday, Sept. 26th, seems to have been to him a day of some labor and trial. He preached to a "ramber of professors" of religion, "pressing the subject of holiness" upon them; but it was found impossible to engage their attention, and he inti-

mates that the indifference was owing to an increasing spirit of formality. Indeed, so dissatisfied was he with the result of his efforts, and with the subsequent idle and worldly conversation of the members, that he could not eat his dinner, but proceeded to Brother Berryman's, a distance of twenty miles, expecting to meet his Presiding Elder, J. O'Kelly. In this hope, however, he was disappointed, although he found Brother William Spencer there, with whom he enjoyed sweet Christian communion. During the whole of this Sabbath afternoon ride he was harassed by temptations, nor found relief until shortly before he reached his destination. He had preached and held class-meeting in the forenoon, and left the house of his friend, who had invited him to dinner, not only without eating, but sorely vexed. His ride was fatiguing. He found Brother Spencer "shut up in a little room, and very sick," and the brethren already collected there for meeting. To add to his excitement against worldly-mindedness in the Church, poor Spencer complained bitterly against the trifling conversation of those who had assembled. Hence Mr. McKendree, having "to hold meeting, took occasion to lecture pointedly upon Sabbath-breaking and levity of deportment." The offenders hung down their heads; some were very penitent, while Brother Spencer and himself "were refreshed and comforted." To reprove sin is sometimes as much a duty as to proclaim glad tidings, and not unfrequently requires far more moral courage; for while no one ever so delighted to comfort and bless men as did our di-

vine Master, yet even he occasionally dealt in anathemas, until a stranger might have supposed that he never used any other trumpet than that of "cursing." But alas for frail humanity! How slight an incident may give a tinge to our emotions, and how often do we mistake the suggestions of our own morbid sensibilities for the impulses of duty! "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," was the Saviour's reply to the prayer for fire to consume a village which had refused to receive him. He turned and rebuked his disciples, and quietly went to another village. How perfect the portraiture of heavenly excellence is Christ's character, as exhibited in the Bible! He was more afflicted by the wrong temper of his disciples than by the disrespect shown himself, and felt that it was more important they should be *right* than that he should be popular. Wrong actions in others do not justify wrong tempers in us; for if Christ's ministers continue right, the errors of the world may at last be corrected; but if they go astray, the recovery of the world is hopeless. Doubtless Mr. McKendree but discharged a pastoral duty in the rebuke he administered in this case, and it is to be hoped that while he performed a painful duty, the manner in which it was done was also right.

On the next day—*i. e.*, Monday, 27th—Mr. O'Kelly, the Presiding Elder, came, and preached on John xvii. 7: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "He opened the doctrine of sanctification to my great satisfaction. In his first head of doctrine, which was to show for whom Christ

prayed, the people seemed sweetly happy; but in the second, which was to show why his prayer is not answered, and what sanctification is, the congregation became unfeeling. We had a melting time at sacrament, *and then the poor miserable Council took up all our time until ten o'clock at night.*" Alas for Mr. O'Kelly! Again at the miserable work of prejudicing the young preachers placed under his charge against the very measure for which he had voted in General Conference; and doubtless inveighing against the motives and administration of the honest, laborious, and unselfish Asbury; drilling his inexperienced and unsuspecting "young men to throw the whole affair out" at the approaching Conference, and thus covertly laying the train whose explosion was to rend the Conference and the Church! Yet even this unsuspecting young preacher, who had been introduced into Conference by him, out of whose District he had never traveled, and to whom he looked up as to a model minister and Christian gentleman, even he is disgusted and worried with the oft-repeated introduction of the subject. What a poor return does Mr. O'Kelly make to Bishop Asbury and the Church for the confidence and respect they evince in giving him a position which he employs to their injury! Unacquainted with the bishop, inexperienced in the wiles of ambition, or the feelings of jealousy, and comparatively ignorant of the government of the Church, our young preacher's guileless heart and earnest piety are not proof against such influences. Indeed, his very love of the Church stimulates to a

more intense dislike of the man he is taught to regard as a tyrant. Mr. O'Kelly was a hot emancipationist. Sanctification was his theme in the pulpit, and detraction of Mr. Asbury his employment out of it. Like most ambitious and disappointed men, he had a high appreciation of his own importance, and fault-finding and defamation seem to have been henceforth his daily work until he seceded. The wonder is that he did not ruin more of the young preachers than he did: perhaps their very ingenuousness and honesty of heart, which he abused to prejudice them against Bishop Asbury, were the means of their being disabused when they came to know him better. Surely, whatever diversities of opinion may exist upon other topics between the different organizations of the great Methodist family in America, they must ever agree and attest that Francis Asbury was, under God, an apostle of Jesus Christ to them all.

In a few days, however, Mr. O'Kelly left the circuit, and Mr. McKendree resumed his labors. He confesses that he felt less inclination for his duties, "and very much concerned about the present aspect of our Church-government." Left to himself, and continuing his course of study and labor, his sky soon became bright again; for shortly afterward we find him saying, of an appointment which he reached with great difficulty, "In the first prayer my soul caught fire; felt light, life, and power in preaching; the place fairly trembled with the engagedness of the people; Christians shouted, and sinners wept." Of course, he held a class-meeting.

"The people went out for class-meeting, but before the door was shut, some came back into the house. I talked with them, and they resolved to seek the Lord. We had a sweet meeting, blessed be God! I hope the labor of this day is not in vain. I feel *complete victory* in my own soul, thanks be to the Lord!"

The *itinerant* system of preaching is of divine appointment, and unquestionably John Wesley, and his sons in the gospel, may justly claim in this respect to be in the "*apostolic succession*." The great Master traveled and preached. His last command was, "Go;" and "as ye go, preach." "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them." Christ had promised to "be with them unto the end of the world." He *was* with *them*, and has ever been with their faithful *successors* in *doctrine*, *experience*, and *labors*. This system is not only necessary as a means of diffusing the word of life among all the scattered population of the globe, but it is the great school for training and perpetuating an efficient and holy ministry. Without it, the world would be much poorer, and the Church would suffer an irreparable loss. True, it is a system often involving exile from "father and mother, brother and sister, houses and lands, wife and children;" it devolves labor, care, and, not unfrequently, affliction and poverty, upon those who engage in it, and sometimes even the loss of life itself; but it must *never* be abandoned. No cost is too great which is necessary to spread "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," and "save the

souls for whom Christ died." The richest gems, the brightest intellects, the most precious lives, the hardest labors, and greatest sacrifices, find their safest and best investment in this godlike work. If archangels were permitted to assume our form for a season, and select their vocations, they would become traveling ministers. They would leave to others to be kings, statesmen, generals, philosophers, and jurists, and, like their and our great Lord, throw all their time and energies into the harvest-field, where souls are reaped for the heavenly garner. Nor would they care much whether their fields of operation might be rich or poor, refined or rustic: if they might have any preference, it would be for the places where their labor might be most needed and most effective.

The emotions of the "good and faithful" itinerant preacher are various and peculiar. Impelled by a conviction of duty which will not allow of indolence or silence, trembling under a sense of the delicacy and responsibility of the ministerial office, deeply and even painfully sensible of his want of qualification for the proper discharge of its various duties, and, sometimes, almost overwhelmed with the discouragements and trials peculiar to the itinerant pastor's work, he needs and must have a frequent baptism of the Holy Ghost to sustain him. And while a consciousness of his personal acceptance with God, and a conviction that the path in which he is treading, although often rugged and thorny, is nevertheless the way of duty, may enable him to bear "the burden of the

Lord" bravely and cheerfully; yet when he sees no fruit of all his toils and cares, but meets with indifference among the unconverted and neglect on the part of his members, ah, then he must have a firm faith in the truth of God's promises, or he will falter in his course. But, on the other hand, when a soothing manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given him, and the seal of divine approval attests his call to the ministry, in the conversion and sanctification of souls, who so happy as he? Then he feels that the longest life is too short, and his utmost energies too small a contribution to so great and glorious a work. Such were the struggles and such the triumphs of young McKendree, and such has been the history of many an humble, laborious traveling preacher, who, like him, lived to work for God and souls, until he died to rest for ever.

The next quotation illustrates his zeal, and evinces his opposition to the "needless self-indulgence" of the use of tobacco—an opposition which he maintained through life.

"*Thursday, Sept. 30, 1790.*—Rode to Brother Andrews's, and met a few people. The Christians were not engaged, and the sinners looked impudently wicked. I strove to be faithful, and was plain in class-meeting. Some seemed a little moved, but so soon as meeting was over and they were out of class, one had a pipe, another was after a chew of tobacco, and the women with their snuff-boxes, until my soul was grieved."

"*Preparation for the pulpit*" is frequently talked about, both among preachers and others; and as-

suredly every preacher should "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed—rightly dividing the word of truth." For this purpose he should read and inwardly digest such books as may conduce to this end, and by no means be guilty of the presumption of supposing that the Spirit of God will as readily give his sanction to an undigested ebullition of fancy and rant as to those sermons which are the result of profound and pious study. But there is one kind of preparation for which our early preachers were remarkable, and to which, under God, they were to a great degree indebted for their wonderful success in winning souls; a preparation for which neither learning nor eloquence—nay, nor every possible literary and mental accomplishment—affords a substitute. Of course, it is the preparation of the *heart* and *soul*. The following quotation from his Diary shows how the subject of this biography sought this qualification:

"October 2d.—Being already at my preaching-place since eight o'clock, I have been with Jesus in this beautiful forest, in deep exercise. My *book* is sweeter than common. O what spirit I find in the word of the Lord! I read it much, and with great delight—often on my knees. I take my flight—on wings of faith and love still mounting higher to the celestial world. One half hour humbly prostrate on my face, to converse with eternity! And such deep views and bright conceptions of eternal things I never had before in all my life. But I must go; the congregation is assembled, and my

watch says eight minutes to twelve o'clock. Farewell, sweet and solemn place! *Lord Jesus, go with me! Amen. Amen.*"

And is it surprising that He who promised, "Lo, I am with you," should verify his promise to such a minister? The Lord Jesus *was* with him—blessed his labors, honored him with a long and useful life, and after enabling him to exhibit a consistent example and adorn various offices in the ministry, dismissed him from earth, and received him to himself. Should the example of this holy man be the means of perpetuating his spiritual, self-denying, and laborious course among his sons in the gospel, the writer's highest desire will have been attained in preparing this work for the press. May *they*, at least, ever remember that *nothing can supersede the necessity of preparing their HEARTS and SOULS for the pulpit, by devout reading and study of the Bible, fervent and frequent prayer, self-examination, and holy meditation!* We do not depreciate the highest mental training—the higher the better; but without this *spiritual* preparation, the highest is far too low for that service in which "*we are workers together with God.*"

The following week was devoted to preaching, visiting the sick, and his usual routine of religious exercises. Twice during the time he preached to congregations of colored people, and was much gratified both by the opportunity and the effect. He expresses surprise and gratitude for the cordial hospitality he received, and particularly for the solicitude evinced by the wealthy and intelligent. but

unconverted, for his company—thinks it an omen for good, and resolves to use it for their spiritual welfare. “Visited Mr. Hardy, who was very ill, ‘of a long hard fever,’ and being invited to preach to those who waited on the sick, gladly embraced the opportunity, and addressed them from ‘Ye must be born again.’”

He notices the following incident as occurring this week. It seems that Robert Green, preacher on Calvert Circuit, had visited Mr. McKendree’s circuit and preached at one of his meeting-houses the day before. “I had fixed my mind upon a text in the morning, but while going into the house, my mind began to *float*. During singing, my subject became entirely foreign to my feelings, and another presented itself to my mind. I took it, and, blessed be the Lord! I felt a tolerable degree of liberty, and my own soul was comforted. After meeting was over, I told Brother Green my exercises concerning the text, when he replied, ‘The text you *lost* I preached from here yesterday.’”

The plan of selecting a text as soon as possible, and always after prayer and proper reflection upon the character and condition of the audience, is certainly judicious; nor should it be changed, after it has been maturely considered, for a mere whim; yet every preacher, except perhaps those who *read* their sermons or deliver them from *memory*, (and it is to be hoped *their* number among us is small,) will occasionally find himself *afloat*, (boatman’s phrase,) and have to fasten to another text. Sometimes the subject is found inappropriate to the audience, but

more frequently, as in the case of Mr. McKendree, it becomes tame to the feelings, or partially beclouded. Then another theme presents itself with more vividness to the mind, and the change is effected. But let the young preacher beware lest he fall into Charybdis in avoiding Scylla; for it does not follow, because one thought associated with the new text may strike his fancy, or because it may seem to be a more impressive theme, that he will be more likely to discuss it profitably. Too many choose their texts as silly men do their wives; for subjects have their drapery as well as persons. The first business of the preacher is to give the meaning of God's word. He should therefore seek to find out the import of his text, and then determine whether the lessons he can fairly deduce from it are likely to be appropriate and useful to his audience. In most cases the extemporaneous preacher who has studied and matured his subject, without having memorized it, has a decided advantage.

Let us not, however, be misunderstood on this subject. We hold that every preacher should cultivate his memory and chasten his style; and as nothing contributes to the latter more than the use of the pen, of course he should write sermons. Neither would we object to his memorizing one of his own composing occasionally, or to his reading it on an *extraordinary* occasion. But such cases should be exceptions—the general rule being “to study the subject thoroughly, and then depend upon his resources for language to express his ideas.” In this way he will form the habit of thinking while

extemporizing, and at the same time all the mental faculties which oratory requires, having been cultivated by previous study, will be improved and adapted to the occasion. The *pompous*, the *elaborate*, and the *rustic* styles of speaking are unfit for the pulpit. The first aims to be impressive—avoids short words as a prudent man does contagion—affects the sublime, but is simply ridiculous, and seeks to carry the citadel by high-sounding nonsense. He attempts to do a large business on a small capital. Words, gestures, and voice, are his merchandise, while his stock of ideas is very deficient; or if perchance he should be heard to utter some scraps of blank verse, a stanza of sonorous rhyme, or a sentence or two a little less magniloquent than his usual inflated style, it may be taken for granted that he is disingenuously appropriating the product of another's mind to his own benefit—a species of petit larceny not unfrequent with such speakers, and for which they deserve to be impaled by public contempt. The second is too learned and philosophic, too stiff and artistic. This is our *amateur preacher*. His terms are refined and unusual. He employs, like some young doctors, scientific and technical words, which common people do not understand. He copies "Plato and Epictetus," not St. Paul nor St. Paul's great Master. Such a preacher may be styled a "beautiful speaker," "learned," and "elegant," and some may be the more impressed with his greatness because they cannot understand him, and therefore suppose he must be a very deep man; but his efficiency is about

equal to a beautifully-painted and neatly-fashioned wooden gun. "Verily he has his reward" in the admiration of the fashionable and silly, who applaud him as they do their favorite actor at the theater, though far less warmly, and are benefited about as much by the performances of the one as the other, with this marked difference as to immediate results, that the one puts them to laughing and crying on Saturday night, while the other simply puts them to sleep on Sabbath. The third uses puns, wit, anecdotes—confines himself to no rules of rhetoric, logic, or grammar—glories in thinking for himself, and has a contempt for the pretensions of the first and the prudery of the second class.

The proper style for the pulpit, and indeed for every kind of public speaking, is such as rises spontaneously from the subject; and it is indispensable that the subject should be clearly conceived and deeply impressed upon the heart. Then, in one of a cultivated mind, emotion will certainly suggest appropriate language. Without passion there is no true eloquence; and passion prompts to natural and simple forms of expression. Sublimity must exist in the *ideas*, or no language can produce them. The eloquence of our Saviour, and of the writers of the sacred volume, gives the noblest specimens. The most sublime and important truths ever conceived are here uttered in the most simple words. And if, at any time, glowing imagery is employed, it results from the fervid condition of the mind under the contemplation of glorious and awful

truths which struggle for utterance. Nor is this vehemence of the mind incompatible with a certain degree of calmness and self-possession so necessary to instruct and guide an audience. Preaching the gospel is the highest office in which the human faculties can be employed. It is a solemn and holy work. "Woe" to him who *trifles* with it, as well as to him who "preaches not the gospel of Christ."

The above reflections were suggested in connection with the history of Mr. McKendree's life. He seems to have had constantly before his mind the apostolic admonition: "Study to show thyself approved unto God—a workman that needeth not to be ashamed—rightly dividing the word of truth." We have seen in what way he studied the Bible, how diligent he was in all the duties of a preacher and pastor, and also how he fasted, watched, prayed, and struggled in the pursuit of personal holiness; and we confess that we have drawn more largely from his Diary, that his successors in the ministry may, for all time to come, have before them his example to incite them to zeal and diligence. His style of preaching was remarkable for clearness and persuasiveness. Few preachers studied the shades of difference in words as he did, and his language was transparent; the idea was distinctly seen, while the words employed in exhibiting it, served only as a medium of intellectual vision. *He was always in earnest.* His soul was pervaded with a sense of God, and his heart yearned for the conversion of his fellow-men. He felt "called of God" to this work, and nothing ever diverted his mind, his heart, or

his physical energies from it. It was the one great end of his life; and that life, so admirable for its beautiful consistency and moral sublimity of purpose, so pure and useful, so full of labor and moral heroism, was the product of "faith unfeigned"—and that faith was of "the operation of God through the Spirit."

What a commentary does such a life afford on the truth and excellency of the Christian religion!

Friday, Oct. 8, 1790, found him quite unwell, and fasting aggravated his sufferings. He, however, tried to preach. After dinner felt better—"had meeting at night for the black brethren," and found amongst them the life and power of religion. "How the world destroys the happiness of white folks!"

"*Saturday*, Oct. 9th.—Out in the woods by break of day, reading, praying, and meditating. Had great delight in the Scriptures, and felt very happy. Preached a close, heart-searching sermon to a serious congregation; held class-meeting."

"*Sunday*, 10th.—Rose at three o'clock A.M.; family prayer at four—a time of heavenly sweetness to our souls. Went into the lovely fields when the blushing morn is dispersing gloomy night; breathed the sweet morning air with the love of God in my soul. About sunrise I began, and preached to about thirty persons, from, 'And the angel said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified: he is not here, for he is risen, as he said.' My dear Master gave me to feel what I preached. Love-feast for the band

society followed. O how the saints did shout and tell the wonders of redeeming love! But had a cold time at public-meeting."

"*Monday*.—Rest-day. Spent my time in reading, writing, prayer, and meditation, except a little for conversation with my brethren. At twelve o'clock, in my general prayer for mankind, I prayed particularly for the preachers. Bless the Lord for the degree of conformity I feel to the Lord's will! O give me *universal* conformity and perfect resignation! In the evening walked to a distant grove and prostrated myself at the feet of the awful Jehovah. Met my brethren in *covenant prayer*; my soul all on fire."

"*Tuesday and Wednesday*.—Comfortable peace; no temptation nor powerful exercise, but a heaven of calm, sweet peace, and a continual rejoicing that 'in simplicity and godly sincerity I have had my conversation in the world.' Solitude is pleasant; meditation delightful; and my Bible is food for my soul."

"*Thursday, 14th*.—Had a comfortable morning. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his great mercy to feeble, unworthy me! I am surely one of the least of thy followers, and am not meet to be called a preacher. And then I am so backward in duty, and so unfaithful in it."

"*Friday, 15th*.—Set out fasting; rode twenty miles; found a pretty large congregation; felt the spirit of preaching; but up rides a strange Elder—would not preach for me. O how the cross began to bear me down! Lord, what is man? Preached; my blessed

Master made the cross light. Visited the precious family of Brother Hill after dinner; met a black class to my comfort, for they seemed perfectly happy, and had 'a good report.'"

From the following Sunday to Thursday he was sick, and says that while others seem to find the time of affliction a season of joy, it is not so with him, but a time of trial—yet, upon close examination, finds no condemnation for known sin; "have had some *weeping times* this week."

The ensuing week seems to have been a period of bodily affliction and labor, yet was he happy and exultant. On Friday, Oct. 22d, he "arose quite unwell—rode twenty miles *fasting*; preached, and held class-meeting—had a glorious time; several were much wrought on; one joined Society, but none converted. At seven o'clock the moon was eclipsed—thought of the day of judgment."

Saturday, Oct. 30th.—Quarterly-meeting began on his circuit. "Rose at two o'clock A.M.; could not lie in bed longer; read my *Book*, prayed, and meditated. To-day Brother Paup preached a beautiful sermon; Brother Spencer followed. At night it fell to my lot to hold meeting; Christians were happy, backsliders cut to the heart, and one soul sprung into life. My cup was filled to the brim."

Sunday, 31st, was a blessed day—early exercises, as usual; "a sweet and awfully glorious time at sacrament; a great many communicants. Brother Paup preached to the white congregation; I went into the grove with the black people, and of a truth Jesus was there."

Perhaps I have tired the patience of my readers with the minute details of Mr. McKendree's Diary. My object is to present a true portraiture of his character, with an earnest desire that his exemplary and profound piety may be useful to the Church, and especially to young preachers. Having given a specimen of his daily life and labors, I shall not henceforth use his Diary very often, except to mark important incidents in his history.

"On Thursday, Nov. 4th, met the preachers in conference at Brother Young's; twenty-two preachers present, and by *nine o'clock agreed to send no member to Council, but stand as we are until next Conference*: Brother O'Kelly preached." This was not the regular session of the Annual Council, but was a convention, called by "proclamation of Mr. O'Kelly, inviting the preachers to meet in Mecklenburg"—the object being to forestall the approaching Council. It should be borne in mind that the Council was a favorite measure with Bishop Asbury—that Mr. O'Kelly had already, by letters, prejudiced Dr. Coke against it, and that he had been untiring in his efforts to array the Virginia preachers against it. Early on the next day, Friday, Nov. 5, 1790, the Conference assembled again: the document which had been ordered was presented, approved, and directed to be forwarded to the Council; thus placing the Virginia Conference almost in the position of seceders.

The regular session of the Council was held, for this year, in Philip Rogers's house, Baltimore, Dec. 1st. In view of the opposition of Dr. Coke,

and the disorganizing tendency of Mr. O'Kelly's course, Bishop Asbury, "for the sake of union," gave up the Council, and they resolved not to send any "recommendatory propositions" to the Conferences—thus letting it silently pass away.

Having taken an affectionate leave of his old circuit, he started immediately for a new field of labor, to which he had been changed, as was then customary, by his Presiding Elder. Taking his father's house on his route, he gladly embraced the opportunity of visiting home, and spending two delightful days with his beloved kindred. He was "comforted" and refreshed by the visit, and felt very "thankful for the opportunity." His pleasure was, however, diminished by the illness of his youngest sister, and the dangerous indisposition of his aged father. When the hour came for his departure, there was a struggle in his heart. Fain would he have lingered awhile amid the scenes of his early life, and watched by the beds of his sick sister and father; but duty called him away to preach among strangers the gospel of Christ, and with tears and prayers, commending his loved ones to God, he turned his back again upon his peaceful home, and felt that the preacher had triumphed over the man.

His course during this year was similar to the year previous. Traveling, studying, preaching, holding class-meetings, fasting, and visiting his charge from house to house, were his daily history. "Rose early, lit my candle, and found the same sweetness in devotion and in reading the Lord's

word. Spent this day and until eleven o'clock at night in closely studying the Scriptures, and reading Church-history, with great delight. Rode through piercing wind and a hard rain twelve miles, which gave me a violent pain in the head. Tempted to omit 'watching' on account of headache, but concluded that the more costly the sacrifice, the stronger is the proof of sincerity. Every night has been a watch-night with me for some time," etc. These quotations evince the spirit with which he prosecuted his mission.

During this year he seems to have had a great many meetings with the black people, and to have enjoyed himself greatly in his labors among them; thus giving an example worthy the imitation of every minister of Christ.

On Dec. 31, 1790, while Mr. McKendree and others were holding a meeting at Brother M.'s, Bishop Asbury arrived there. He had been making a tour in the lower part of Virginia—had preached in James City and in the city of Williamsburg, and after crossing James River in a boat, the bottom of which was covered with ice, had rode through a snow storm for several miles. Coming to Brother M.'s, he "found Brother Paup preaching, and the people shouting." The good old Bishop says, "I preached on Ephesians v. 17-19. I afterward had an interview with Brother Paup, and a more full account of our *disaffected brethren*." Indeed, so soon as he entered the District of Mr. O'Kelly, he says, "I heard some painful circumstances relative to our disaffected brethren. I leave these things to

God," etc. Mr. O'Kelly had scattered discord broadcast over his whole District, and was likely to disaffect the whole Conference. He ought not to have been continued upon the District a day after he evinced his design. It was Bishop Asbury's leniency, not to say timidity, that gave to this dangerous man the opportunity of doing so much mischief. It would have been better to deprive him at once of the District. He had already gone too far to retract, and nothing was gained, but much lost, by attempts at conciliating him.

Mr. McKendree, who had spent all his time as a preacher under Mr. O'Kelly, was accustomed to hear Bishop Asbury alluded to by his Elder as ambitious and aristocratic; and in proportion to his confidence in the latter, the former was depreciated in his estimation. Still he was honest and candid; and this interview must have awakened doubts in his mind as to the justness of his Elder's representations. His account of this meeting with the Bishop is as follows:

"Our reverend Bishop arrived, gave us a most excellent discourse, at the close of which the power of the Lord came down on the people."

"*Saturday, Jan. 1, 1791.*—Bishop Asbury, two other preachers, and myself rode about sixteen miles. The wind was very keen, and the snow about eight inches deep; our poor horses were much fatigued, and ourselves pierced with the cold. We got to Mr. Blunt's. *I am astonished at the Bishop's sweet simplicity and uncommon familiarity.* Love appeared to sweeten all our conversation."

“*Astonished at the Bishop’s sweet simplicity!*” And why? Forsooth, because he had often heard him represented as austere and despotic. Yes, the pure and noble Asbury—the father of American Methodism—whose life was one continuous sacrifice—one long, yearning struggle of soul, body, and spirit for the peace and prosperity of Zion, and who literally fell a victim to unselfish and never-ceasing toil in the Master’s cause—even he astonished Mr. McKendree by his simple and familiar manners! And yet this favorable impression was soon to be erased by the unfortunate Presiding Elder, to be renewed again, however, and grow stronger during many years of associated labor, and even until the grave had closed upon the remains of the wise and good old Bishop.

The death of Mr. Wesley, which occurred March 2, 1791, deeply affected the Methodists in America, as well as in England. They felt as a large and affectionate family feels in the loss of a father. Their enemies had predicted that this event would be speedily followed by the dissolution of the Connection, and many of their friends were fearful of the same result. When the sad intelligence reached the United States, Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury were traveling together through Virginia. The Doctor immediately resolved to return to England. Before his departure, however, he and Bishop Asbury attended the Virginia Conference in Petersburg, April 20th, and “the affair of the Council was suspended until a General Conference.” This seemed to give satisfaction even to Mr. O’Kelly,

and the session was peaceful and happy. The time of holding the Conference was here changed from the spring to the winter, and the ensuing Conference was appointed to be held in December. Of course, Mr. McKendree attended the Conference. Here he was appointed to Amelia Circuit, with John Baldwin as his colleague, and Mr. O'Kelly again as his Elder.

As the Diary of Mr. McKendree, to which reference has so often been made, leaves here a chasm in his history, we have no other account of the manner in which he conducted himself during the remainder of this year, but his own general statement. "I enjoyed peace of mind and comfortable fellowship with those among whom I labored."

The Conference began at Lane's Chapel, Dec. 23, 1791—Bishop Asbury presiding. Dr. Coke was still in England. Bishop Asbury says, "This Conference began and ended in peace;" and doubtless this was greatly promoted by the announcement that a General Conference would be held the ensuing year. Mr. O'Kelly and his friends seemed satisfied. On Sunday, Dec. 25, 1791, Mr. McKendree was ordained elder by Bishop Asbury, as appears from his parchment of ordination now before me. And now, having followed his history up to the period of his induction into the full office of the ministry, and from the stand-point which his biographer occupies, contemplating the remainder of his long, useful, and exemplary life and labors, we are forcibly impressed with the conviction that few ministers of Christ have ever taken upon them the

solemn vows of the ordination service more thoroughly penetrated with a conviction of their holy and sublime import, or have given such evidence of their inflexible purpose to keep these vows inviolable to life's last hour. Happy for the Church and the world if all his brethren would follow him as he followed Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

McKendree appointed to Greenville Circuit in 1791—General Conference, 1792—O'Kelly withdraws and dies—McKendree declines the work, but soon resumes it—Asbury appoints him to Norfolk—Conference in Petersburg in 1773—Travels three months with Asbury—Union Circuit—Philip Bruce, Presiding Elder—Tobias Gibson, his colleague—Conference in 1794 at Mabry's—John Kobler—Conference, 1795—Is made Presiding Elder—Continued three years—1798 he presides in the bounds of Baltimore Conference—In 1800 Bishop Asbury takes him to the West—Large District—Difficulties—Labors—Usefulness—1801 travels through the wilderness with Asbury—In 1804, General Conference—Jerks—Dancing—Shaking Quakers—Seceders from Presbyterian Church—Marshallites—Stoneites—McKendree chief conservator of Methodism in the West.

At the Lane's Chapel Conference, held in Southampton county, Virginia, Dec. 23, 1791, Mr. McKendree was appointed to the charge of Greenville Circuit, with Joel Tucker as his "helper." Several things conspired to make him reluctant to enter upon the duties of this charge. It was the circuit in which his relations and many of his old acquaintances resided: there he was converted and began his ministry. He was aware that it would be necessary to execute the rules of the Discipline upon many who were "older members of the societies than himself," some of whom considered themselves his

“superiors;” and fearing they would not bear from him this wholesome and important moral regimen, he felt strongly opposed to this appointment when first announced. But as there was no alternative, except a cowardly backing-out of the responsibilities which, in God’s providence, had been devolved upon him, he determined to undertake his duties in humble dependence upon his divine Master. He was soon convinced that his fears were groundless. His old friends received him warmly, the community evinced their respect for him by attending his ministry, and treating him in every respect with the attention which his pure personal character and his holy office demanded; and although he was compelled, in the discharge of his duty as preacher in charge, to exclude many from the Church, he says that “no fixed prejudices in consequence of the administration resulted. True, we had but few additions, yet we had many sweet and precious meetings. The work of sanctification revived,” etc.

The letter of Mr. McKendree to Bishop Asbury, already quoted, reveals the fact that his happiness and usefulness at this time were diminished by prejudices engendered in his mind by Mr. O’Kelly, his old friend and Presiding Elder, who attacked the character of Bishop Asbury—more than insinuated that he was insincere and ambitious, and that the ruin of the Church could be prevented in no other way but by “counteracting measures.”

The General Conference met in Baltimore, Oct.

31, 1792.* This was the first Conference of the kind held since the organization of the Church in 1784, and was composed of all the traveling preachers in full connection. And it continued to meet quadrennially in the same capacity, and with the same almost unlimited power, until the session of 1800, when the terms of membership were restricted to those who had traveled *four years*, and in 1808 the delegated General Conference was substituted for this meeting of the whole body of the preachers.

* In 1858, Bishop Morris, in an article in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, said, "If any regular sessions (of the General Conference) were held in 1788 and 1792, the Minutes were not printed—probably not recorded, and are lost. It is presumable they were held, and that they were held in the autumn." To which F. S. DeHass replies: "The Bishop is right in his presumption that they were held, and held in the autumn. But we are happy to say the Minutes are not entirely lost, and at some future day we may give the Minutes of these two important Conferences in full. The first met Sept. 10, 1788—the other Nov. 1, 1792."

We think that the Bishop and Mr. DeHass are both in error as to 1788—the former as to his "presumption," the latter as to his facts. There is no evidence that a General Conference was held in 1788. There was a Conference held in Baltimore on Sept. 10th of that year, which continued from Wednesday until Sunday; but it was not a *General* Conference, but the annual session of the Baltimore Conference. The "*Council*" plan was introduced; the Bishops and Presiding Elders met instead of a General Conference, from about 1788 to 1792, when that plan was superseded by a regular General Conference, or Convention. The delegated General Conference, it will be remembered, was provided for in 1808. If Mr. DeHass can give us the Minutes of the Conference of 1788 "*in full*," or even in part, we shall be greatly surprised.

The Conference of 1792 was a very important session. The several Annual Conferences had agreed to meet to review the condition of the Church, to revise and adopt such rules and measures as might be found proper, and to settle certain questions which threatened the peace, if not the very existence, of the Church. The body was comparatively a large one, representing every part of the Connection, and in this respect was the first *General Conference* after the organization of the Church in 1784. Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury "presided conjointly over their deliberations." Mr. McKendree, accompanied by Mr. O'Kelly, went to Baltimore to attend its session. They lodged together: their room became the place for the meeting of Mr. O'Kelly's discontented friends. The result of the caucus was an attempt to restrict the power of the Bishops in the appointment of the preachers. For this end Mr. O'Kelly brought forward a resolution, giving to "any preacher who may think himself injured by the appointment of the Bishop, the liberty to appeal to the Conference." After three days' animated discussion, the resolution was lost by a large majority. Next morning he signified in writing to the Conference that he should withdraw on account of the failure of his motion. Throughout this whole proceeding Bishop Asbury behaved with his usual modesty and propriety. He resigned the chair to Dr. Coke, and absented himself from the Conference, that the members might be under no restraint on account of his presence. This decision by the great body of the preachers them-

selves, in favor of continuing the appointing power in the hands of the Bishop, after having tested the system for many years, was a signal vindication, both of the administration and their devotion to the great cardinal feature of Methodism—its itinerancy.

But Mr. O'Kelly had gone too far to retract. In vain did the Conference send Freeborn Garrettson and two other members to dissuade him from secession, and reäsure him of their good-will—Dr. Coke in vain sought to pacify his feelings in a personal, private interview—nothing but division would do him. He broke off, left the city, and induced Mr. McKendree and some others to leave with him.

All except Mr. O'Kelly, however, asked and obtained permission to return home without giving notice as to their ulterior purposes. Indeed, so far as they were concerned, they do not seem to have had any fixed purpose. They had many consultations upon their journey home. The latter part of the trip, Mr. McKendree was the only companion of his late Presiding Elder. He unfolded his plan to his young *protégé*. It was, to have "*a republican, no slavery, glorious Church!*" Bishop Asbury was a pope; the General Conference was a revolutionizing body; the Bishop and his creatures were working the ruin of the Church to gratify their pride and ambition!"

Indeed, there is a strong probability that, knowing he would be impeached on account of his denial of the distinct personality of the holy Trinity,

he felt himself "in a strait between expulsion and secession."*

The Conference adjourned on the 14th of November, after having revised the Discipline with "regard to its subject-matter as a manual of Christian duty, and as to the form and arrangement of the book itself, but not effecting its fundamental laws or doctrines."

On the 26th of November, Bishop Asbury opened the Conference for the Virginia District, in Manchester. The interval between the General and the Annual Conferences was too short to afford time for the removal of the feeling excited at the General Conference. Sympathizing deeply with his old, and apparently his best friend, imperfectly acquainted with the subject of Church-government, and, with the docility almost of a child, confiding in the misrepresentations of Mr. Asbury's character, and of the consequences likely to result to the Church from the action of the General Conference, as instilled into his mind by Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. McKendree respectfully wrote to the Conference, declining to take an appointment for the ensuing year. At the suggestion of Bishop Asbury, the Conference generously agreed that Mr. O'Kelly, "in view of his age and services," should receive his annual salary of £40, as when he traveled in the Connection, provided he should not excite divisions among the members; and he actually received his salary for a part of the year. But, un-

* Life and Times of Jesse Lee, p. 26. •

fortunately, he resolved to rend all the ties that bound him to the Church, and set up in opposition to it his ideal "glorious Church." I need not repeat the sad narrative of his subsequent history—of the prejudices he excited against the Bishop and the Conference; of his too successful efforts to draw off disciples after him; of his waning influence, until he lost the confidence and affections of the people almost altogether; and of his death, in 1826, in the 92d year of his age, preceded by a very touching interview between Bishop Asbury and himself. It is a melancholy story, and it is hoped may never be repeated in the future history of our Methodism.

Shortly after the close of the Virginia Conference, Bishop Asbury passed through the neighborhood of Mr. McKendree's father. The mind of young McKendree was ill at ease about his duty, and having had an interview with the Bishop, he was treated with great kindness, and invited to travel with him awhile. The invitation was accepted, and as they went from one of the Bishop's appointments to another, through the eastern portion of Virginia, they calmly and fully discussed the subjects of Church-government—especially Methodist government—the late attempt to change the system, the course and design of Mr. O'Kelly, and the consequences likely to result to himself and others. Bishop Asbury did not correspond to the description which Mr. McKendree had heard of him. Instead of being austere, proud, ambitious, and bent upon subjecting the

liberties of the membership and the ministry to his will, he was surprised to find him humble, devout, self-denying, and unceasing in his efforts for the welfare of the Church. He soon understood, too, the evil consequences which would inevitably follow the adoption of Mr. O'Kelly's late favorite measure—the ruin of the General Superintendency, and of the whole itinerant system. The spell of the enchanter was broken; humbled and mortified at his own weakness, with characteristic candor, he confessed his error, was received again into the confidence of the noble and warm-hearted old Bishop, and at once sent to the city of Norfolk as the stationed preacher. This is the amount of Mr. M'Kendree's defection. He had been perplexed and bewildered by the misrepresentations of his Presiding Elder—"cast down, but not destroyed." He did not withdraw from the Church or the ministry. His itinerancy was temporarily suspended, at his own request, but after about a month he resumed his position and his work in the ranks with his late associates, having become a wiser man. His love of the Church and the purity of his motives were unquestionable. The mental and religious struggle through which he passed in this affair led him to examine more critically the system of Church-government recommended by Mr. Wesley and adopted by the General Conference of 1784, and resulted in strengthening his attachment to the existing institutions of the Church, and fixing him inflexibly against all sudden and serious changes in its polity. Disaffection to Methodism,

it has been said, is a disease which never attacks a member or minister but once in his life. If he recover from this attack, he is in no danger of it any more. And so it was with Mr. McKendree. Henceforth he was ever among the most zealous, able, and consistent advocates of its polity, never wavering nor ceasing to defend and promote the welfare of the Church, with all the energies of his soul and body, to the day of his death.

The name of William McKendree appears in the "Minutes of 1793," in charge of Norfolk and Portsmouth. His own concise account of this year's work is as follows: "Though it was a year of contention and much confusion, I enjoyed peace with the members of the station." This contention and confusion were no doubt mainly owing to the efforts of Mr. O'Kelly and his adherents to prejudice the community against the Church, and draw off its membership. It was a time of trial. Many excellent members and some useful preachers, influenced by their respect for Mr. O'Kelly, and not fully apprehending the subject, were misled and abandoned the Church. Church-relations and family ties were rudely sundered—love and harmony were succeeded by "strife and every evil work," and the enemies of Methodism exulted at the prospect of witnessing the fulfillment of its predicted dissolution. And although the principal agent in this deplorable secession soon saw that his plan was a failure, so far as regards his usefulness, or the ruin of the Church he had deserted, yet within the bounds of his old District, and among many

of his old friends, he wrought irreparable injury. Many long years have scarcely yet obliterated the painful results of that day upon the descendants of those who were so unfortunate as to have followed him. Indeed, no one gained any thing by this schism, while the Church, the community, and even the agitators themselves, were injured.

The lesson enforced by this sad occurrence is, that a needless rending of Church-relations is a great evil. To justify it, there must be a conviction that its doctrines or its economy are unscriptural, or its administration subversive of the high and holy ends of Church-organization. Duty to the Church itself, as well as fealty to its Head, may demand the sacrifice of union, when the Church departs from the precepts of the Bible and sets herself to a course which must work the ruin of the great object of her organization; but woe to those who for trivial causes or selfish ends seek to divide the Church of God!

At the ensuing Conference, which was held in Petersburg, November 25, 1793, his character was passed as blameless—fifty-five preachers present, Bishop Asbury presiding. His appointment for the next year was to Union Circuit, with Nicholas Waters as his helper. Tobias Gibson was also appointed to this circuit for one quarter. It seems that at this Conference he offered to travel awhile with Bishop Asbury, that his offer was accepted, and that the quarter spent in the company of that excellent and wise man was very profitably employed. At the close of the three months, he en-

tered upon the work assigned him, and Tobias Gibson, according to a previous arrangement, became the Bishop's traveling companion. Union Circuit was in the State of South Carolina, and his Presiding Elder this year was Philip Bruce, of precious memory. We have no record of the manner in which he conducted himself upon this circuit, but doubt not he manifested his usual zeal and industry, and was useful in getting souls converted and building up the Church.

Heretofore separate Conferences had been held in Virginia, North and South Carolina; but by agreement among them, they were all to meet at Petersburg on the 25th of November, 1794. The small-pox prevailing in that place at the time, the Conference was held at "Sister Mabry's," in Greenville county—about eighty preachers present, and Bishop Asbury presiding. At this Conference, he was appointed to Bottetourt Circuit, Virginia, under John Kobler as his Presiding Elder. Here again we have no written *data* of his course; but as he was considered worthy and faithful by his colleagues, we have a right to presume that neither his character nor his manner of life changed for the worse. And this inference is strengthened by the fact that at the next Conference, held at Salem Chapel, Mecklenburg county, Virginia, November 24, 1795, he was appointed, by Bishop Asbury, Presiding Elder over a very important District, in the Virginia Conference. He had now been eight years a regular itinerant preacher. He had won the esteem of every community among whom he

had labored, and enjoyed in a high degree the confidence and love of the preachers. He had been studious, prompt in the discharge of every duty, zealous, and laborious. His standard of morals and religious experience had been the Holy Scriptures. He had sought and found the blessing of sanctifying love, and in every manner had made "full proof of his ministry." Now he was called to preside over a District, and at the same time was placed as preacher in charge of a circuit; for in those days, "the higher the office, the harder the work." The next year, his District was greatly enlarged, and he was found to be admirably adapted to this work of supervising the operations of the preachers and the general interests of the Church within his District. He remained upon it three years. As Presiding Elder, his sphere of useful labor was greatly enlarged. His District extended from the Chesapeake Bay over the Blue Ridge and Alleghany Mountains, and embraced an extensive region of territory upon the western waters. The rides were long, and the charge required much preaching and devolved upon him many cares. The following is his own account of these three years of sacrifice and toil:

"I was blessed with many friends on this District, abundant in kind offices, and some of them able counselors. We were blessed with a revival of religion; many professed to obtain regenerating grace, and joined the Church. The members provoked one another to love and good works, and their advancement in the divine life was evident.

But the abundant labors and care which the charge imposed were too great for my strength. My studies were partially prevented by attention to other branches of duty, and my nervous system was somewhat impaired. But I was fully compensated in having intimate union and communion with the adorable Saviour, and the increasing prosperity of the Church at once invigorated my zeal and increased my joy in the Lord."

In 1798, he was appointed to a District lying in the bounds of the Baltimore Conference, contiguous to that he had traveled the three preceding years, and which was almost as large as the former field of his labors. It extended from the Chesapeake Bay over the Blue Ridge, and terminated at the foot of the Alleghany Mountains. This was to him a year of labor and trials; but he says "they were forgotten in the overwhelming communion with God, and reviving interviews with my followers. Here I found fathers and mothers in Israel, by whose example I was edified and comforted."

Following the narrative of Bishop Soule in his funeral discourse already adverted to, we proceed to say, that in the spring of 1800, he was returned to the District from which he had been taken the year before, and, in the fall of the same year, Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat passed through his District, and took him with them to the Western Conference, which met at Bethel, Kentucky, in October, 1800.

Here he was appointed to the oversight of the whole Conference, in the character of a Presiding Elder of the District which embraced the State of

Kentucky and that part of Virginia west of the Great Kanawha River, East and West Tennessee, and all the settled territory west of the Ohio River, including what is now the State of Ohio, and an extensive mission in the State of Illinois. The Natchez Mission was also connected with this charge. He had now to travel about fifteen hundred miles to compass his District, and the whole of it, with the exception of East Tennessee and Western Virginia, was a new and rapidly populating country. This was a field of labor and enterprise well suited to the enlightened views and ardent devotion of this excellent minister of Christ. It was a work worthy of St. Paul, and which required the zeal of an apostle to accomplish it. He entered into it with a deep sense of his dependence upon divine aid, and with that vigorous and persevering activity which, by the blessing of God, was attended with abundant success. It should be remembered that a very large portion of the country embraced in his new charge was just being settled with emigrants from the old States, who were subject to the discomforts common to the first settlers in all new countries. Small companies of these emigrants would locate themselves in neighborhoods many miles remote from each other, without any method of intercourse but the pocket compass, trees marked with the ax, or the tops of bushes bent down and half broken. These were the landmarks and highways of our McKendree through a large part of the Valley of the Mississippi.

It was his wise and benevolent plan, with the

handful of preachers in his charge, to advance with the population of the country, and to plant the standard of the cross, and preach Jesus and the resurrection in the frontier settlements.

In the prosecution of this plan, he and his noble band of fellow-laborers had necessarily to encounter and overcome many formidable difficulties. They were frequently ministers of gospel consolation to the people in their camps and cabins, in the woods and canebrakes, before their fields had been opened sufficiently to raise a comfortable support for their families. In getting to them, for the want of roads or paths, they were conducted through the trackless woods; and for want of bridges or boats, they swam rivers and creeks. They carried their provisions for man and beast on their horses, cooked their simple meals in the wilderness, slept at night upon their blankets, and under the open sky : owls, bears, wolves, and panthers were their serenaders, and sometimes the wily and cruel Indian dogged their steps by day, and hovered around their camp-fires at night, to steal or kill as his sagacity might dictate. In the morning, if spared, they raised their hearts in gratitude, and went on their way rejoicing.

But let us hear his own description, drawn from experience, of the Methodist traveling preacher's life in the Western frontier work: "While on the way through these frontier settlements, if we came to a creek or river, we had the privilege of swimming it; and when safely landed on the other bank, it was a consolation to reflect we had left that ob-

struction behind, and that the way to the next lay open and plain before us. If night overtook us before we could reach a house, it was our privilege to gather wood where we could find it, make a fire, eat our morsel, and supplicate a throne of grace with as free access as in a palace or a church. Being weary, we rested sweetly and securely under the divine protection; and when we arrived at our destination, if the accommodations were of the humblest kind, we had the inexpressible satisfaction of being received with a hearty welcome, and accommodated with the best the family could afford; and, though very inferior in the estimation of the delicate and those accustomed to sumptuous fare, yet all the real wants of nature were supplied. We ate heartily, slept sweetly, and rejoiced with the pious and affectionate people who received and treated the ministers of the gospel as angels of God; and, above all, when the time arrived for us to deliver our message, the people flocked together, and seemed to want to hear what God the Lord would say. The prayers of the pious ascended the hill of the Lord; divine power attended the preaching of the word; sinners were convicted, many were converted to God, and the Church was enlarged and 'built up in the faith once delivered to the saints.'" In conclusion, he says: "My appointment required much riding. I preached often, and sustained a great charge; and yet I esteem those among the happiest days of my life. Strange as it may seem, there, in the midst of exposure and many privations, my impaired constitution was restored, and

my general health greatly improved. I enjoyed peace and consolation through faith, and was enabled to walk with God." Eight years of Mr. McKendree's life—*i. e.*, from 1800 to 1808—were spent in this way while presiding over the work in the wilds of the Western frontier. They were years of almost inconceivable hardship and toil, but of great usefulness and happiness. His being selected for this post by Mr. Asbury seems to have been providential, for scarcely another man could have been found combining so many qualifications for this delicate and difficult field of ministerial labor.

It evinced that great peculiarity in Mr. Asbury's character, by which he seemed almost intuitively to read the characters of men, and was thus enabled to select the proper preachers for the appointments. Never was a more felicitous appointment made than was the selection of this devoted servant of Jesus to the Western work. His deep piety and fervid zeal, his intimate knowledge of the doctrines and discipline of the Church, his remarkable capacity to govern, and to infuse into the preachers his own spirit; his almost morbid love of order, and his methodical manner of conducting business; his wonderful astuteness and quickness of apprehension, combined with a grave and yet most prepossessing personal appearance, and his wonderful power of illustrating whatever he sought to teach—all concurred to mark him as preëminently the man for the people and the country. God seems to have raised him up for this very position; and while thousands have already blessed God for it, future

generations of Methodists in the West and South will look back with gratitude to his influence in building up and extending the work of God in this wide field of his operations. How much Methodism owes to him for its success in this region, can never be known until the light of eternity shall reveal it.

Never did the Church more urgently need an able and devoted leader to guide and control its operations than did the vast District to which Mr. McKendree was assigned at the Western Conference of 1800. Indications of religious quickening had occurred in several sections of the country in 1799; and in 1800, what is familiarly known as "the great revival in the Western county," took place. Bishop Asbury had not visited them since 1793. The District had been left without a Presiding Elder at their last Conference; the circuits which were very large had but one preacher, and local preachers were quite scarce. Among the latter, however, the names of John McGee, Nathanael Harris, Benjamin Northcut, Philip Taylor, and others deserve notice; while among the few itinerants scattered over the region, William Burke, Henry Smith, John Sale, John Page, Thomas Wilkerson, and others not so well known, were bold and powerful ministers of Christ. Among the Presbyterians, Messrs. McGready, Wm. McGee, (brother to the Methodist preacher,) Rankin, and Hodge, deserve honorable mention for their talents and usefulness in this revival.

If the history of this glorious work had not been already given to the public, it might be profitable to trace the progress and results of it, but as that

has been done with sufficient minuteness by several writers, we shall only add that it seemed to burst forth almost simultaneously in various places in Kentucky, and in that part of Middle Tennessee bordering upon the line of Kentucky. Cane Ridge, Red River, and Bourbon county, Kentucky, were specially the places where the work received a mighty impulse. Meetings began to be held all over the country, attended by immense crowds of most deeply-excited hearers. The Presbyterian and Methodist preachers labored together as brethren; a "*union*" was formed; the large meetings were placed under the charge of committees, who were to appoint the preachers to the pulpit, and supervise the exercises as representatives of the two Churches. *Camp-meetings* sprung up as a convenience, if not a necessity. The revival spread with unparalleled rapidity and overwhelming power; meetings were prolonged day and night for eight or ten days successively, and many thousands in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio were the trophies of the work. As might be expected in so wide-spread and general a state of religious excitement, there were excesses and irregularities among some of the subjects. The exercises known as *jerks* and *dancing* appeared, although discountenanced generally by the more intelligent and sedate part of the ministers and members. A great deal of enthusiasm was excited, and doubtless some fanaticism also; yet a vast amount of good was accomplished, and many who seemed to act from impulse, and ran into excesses in manifesting their emotions, became steady

and consistent Christians, and closed life in peace and hope. The Churches had a fresh baptism, and were united in fraternal love. Unfortunately, however, the peculiarities of Methodism—class-meetings, love-feasts, and the regular operations of the itinerant system—were suspended for the occasion, under the influence of the “union agreement;” and the supposed Arminian tendency of the Cumberland Presbytery, and their refusal to withhold licenses from men who were useful and acceptable to the community, but were not classically educated, brought about a serious and permanent division of the Presbyterian Church.

This refusal on the part of the Cumberland Presbytery to abide by the requirements of their Church, resulted in the secession of some excellent ministers, and the organization of the *Cumberland Presbyterian Church*. This Church having materially modified the Calvinism of the “Westminster Confession,” and adopted an itinerant system of preaching, has accomplished much good in the West and South, and continues to evince that it is a true branch of the living Vine.

Mr. McKendree arrived in this country when this religious excitement was at its height, and passed, along with his venerable traveling companions, through Kentucky, and down to Nashville, Tennessee, preaching with great power and success wherever he went. The more he surveyed the field of his future labor, the more was he impressed with the exceeding delicacy and difficulty of the task before him. He clearly saw that the time of sifting

and of trial was at hand—that the existing state of things could not endure—the *union* would soon terminate, and that the least impropriety on the part of any of the preachers would be quoted as a violation of the “agreement.” He resolved, if he could, he would avoid this odium; and owing to his prudence and firmness, the Methodists came honorably out of this entangling alliance, and the parties resumed the proper and independent exercise of their respective Church-regulations without a serious breach of esteem and brotherly love.*

Mr. McKendree was now in a position which called forth all the qualities of his mind and heart, and taxed to their utmost capacity the energies of his manly and vigorous body. His eminent piety and punctual attention to all the rules of holy living, made him an admirable example both for

* Our McKendree's advice to preachers and people was, “Hold fast to your doctrine and discipline. Others may get along without rule, but we cannot.” This was wholesome and seasonable advice, and was attended to. It gave offense to some, but was a means of keeping us together, and we prospered. But, mournful to tell, those who got above creeds, forms, and confessions, while they professed to be Christians, went from one extreme to another, till three of their most zealous and flaming ministers (Presbyterian) landed in Shakerism—one, if not more, became an Arian—one, at least, went among the *Christ-ians*, and the rest held fast or returned to their Confession of Faith.—*H. Smith's Recollections of an Old Itinerant*, pp. 59, 60.

The Presbyterians in Cumberland managed their revival much better, for when they could no longer subscribe to every part of their Confession of Faith, they organized an independent Presbytery, into which they admitted men of gifts and usefulness, without requiring a collegiate education, etc.—P. 60.

preachers and members, and gave force to his office and his character. His clear apprehension of biblical doctrines, his thorough acquaintance with Methodism, his tact in simplifying to the most ordinary capacity any subject which he had studied, his persuasive and winning manners, united to a remarkable power of close and logical analysis, blending at the same time the tenderest pathos with an occasional burst of the sublime and even the terrible in his moments of earnest and impassioned eloquence, made him a model preacher, and, by the blessing of God, gave great efficiency to his ministrations.

Yet all these qualifications, however important to his usefulness as a preacher, would not have insured his success as the presiding officer in a great moral and religious enterprise. And happily these were not all, nor were they his chief qualifications, for the post he occupied. He had a mature mind, a sound judgment, a determined will, and (what is of infinite importance to one in his position) could arrange and plan his work with a view to ulterior results, with almost unequaled skill; and what he planned with so much wisdom, he executed with equal ardor and perseverance. Nothing diverted his attention from the work of God. He had no family ties demanding his attention; and the pecuniary condition of those most nearly related to him was not such as to give him anxiety. As to wealth and honor, he "spurned them." Personal ease had no allurements for him. If ever a human heart loved Jerusalem above its chief joy—loved it

with all the tenderness and strength of a pure, deep, and filial affection, and "drew all its cares and studies this way," his was that heart, and the Methodist Church was to him as a precious mother. He cared little about aught else. He firmly believed that Methodism, in its doctrines, was the simplest and best exponent of Scripture truth, that its moral regimen was practical Christianity, and its polity—especially its great itinerant system of preaching the gospel, sustained by an efficient, impartial, and practical general superintendency—was the best plan yet devised for the universal diffusion of religious truth; and honestly and cordially believing thus, he threw himself into the ranks of the brave and true-hearted who gave themselves "a living sacrifice" to the noblest of causes, under the conviction that he had nothing too good to give to such an object, and that a short life is not too long to "apply wholly to this one thing." So had he vowed in his solemn ordination, and that vow he kept.

The late Rev. James Gwin, himself a resident of Tennessee, and for many years a useful traveling preacher under Mr. McKendree, made the following remarks in reference to his peculiar qualifications as a Presiding Elder on frontier work:

"Brother McKendree, having been appointed to the charge of the western work, soon formed a plan to carry the gospel to every neighborhood. He employed as many local preachers and exhorters as he could, to visit the uncultivated regions; and they went forth, and the Lord went with them, and the

tidings of salvation were soon heard in almost every settlement. In traveling through the barrens of Kentucky, he found a place where preaching was needed, and sent that excellent man, John McGee, to it. He preached, a gracious revival followed, a society was raised, and a church built. As I commenced about this time to speak in public, he sent me to visit the new settlement, and I continued preaching from place to place until our Conference came on; then I was received into the traveling connection on trial. The business of Jesse Walker and myself, who were received at the same time, was to *enlarge* the work. . . . The work spread rapidly—for until then there was but one circuit in all the region about Nashville and Galatin. Red River and Barren Circuits were soon formed, then Green River and Roaring River Circuits were added, and Brother Walker went on forming circuits west and north until he reached the Ohio River, and Brother McKendree devised a plan to carry the gospel west of the Ohio to the Mississippi River. And as Louisiana had been purchased and brought into our government, he sent Brothers Walker and Lewis Garrett to make a trial in that region, where they soon succeeded in planting the standard of the cross.”

Dr. Bangs (History M. E. Church, Vol. II., p. 111) says:

“Mr. McKendree was the life and soul of this army of itinerants. Wherever he went, both by precept and example, he aroused the lukewarm to diligence, confirmed those who stood in the faith,

and alarmed the fears of careless sinners, by his powerful appeals to their consciences. By this means many local preachers who had moved into the country were induced to forsake their secular employments and enter the ranks of the itinerancy."

The District to which Mr. McKendree was appointed in 1801 was called Kentucky District—this being the first time that names were given to Districts. Its limits, however, as we have already seen, were far from being restricted to the State of Kentucky.

The ensuing Conference was held at Ebenezer, in East Tennessee, beginning on the 31st of October, 1801. Bishop Asbury was present, and says in his Journal, "Our brethren in Kentucky did not attend; they pleaded the greatness of the work of God." Mr. McKendree was returned to his former District. Natchez was now added to his District, and Tobias Gibson, of precious memory, was sent to that work as the only itinerant preacher in all that region. The next Conference was held at Strother's, or Station Camp, in Sumner county, Tennessee, October 2, 1802, and again the aged but indefatigable Asbury was present, although too much afflicted to be able to preach. He says, however, "I was able to ordain by employing Brother McKendree to examine those who were presented, and to station the preachers." The Minutes for this year show that the work was steadily advancing in the West, insomuch that it was now found necessary to divide it into three Districts—Holston and Cumber-

land being added to Kentucky, Mr. McKendree continuing upon the last.

Bishop Asbury continuing in very infirm health, and suffering great pain from exposure and long rides on horseback, Mr. McKendree accompanied him on his return to the East, through East Tennessee. Bishop Asbury, in his Journal, speaks most respectfully and gratefully of his kindness to him on this trip, and frequently alludes to his preaching. "Brother McKendree made me a tent," says Bishop Asbury, in this wilderness journey, "of his own and John Watson's blankets, and happily saved me from taking cold, while I slept about two hours under my *grand marquee*. Brother McKendree threw his cloak over the limb of a tree, and he and his companion took shelter underneath and slept also. I think I will never more brave the wilderness without a tent." After some time he adds, "I have been sick for twenty-three days—ah, the tale of woe I might relate! My dear McKendree had to lift me up and down from my horse, like a helpless child. For my sickness and suffering, I conceive, I am indebted to sleeping uncovered in the wilderness. . . . On Monday, 8th November, I parted from my dear McKendree."

Mr. McKendree spent this year in his usual manner. He attended Conference at Mount Gerizim, Harrison county, Kentucky, October 2, 1803. The work was enlarging in the West, and the tide of emigration so astonishingly rapid that Bishop Asbury found it necessary to form a new District north-west of the Ohio River, with William Burke

as Presiding Elder. Mr. McKendree remained on the Kentucky, John Watson on the Holston, and Lewis Garrett was placed upon the Cumberland District.

As this closed his fourth year upon the Kentucky District, let us advert to the increase of the membership which had occurred within the bounds of his original District. The General Minutes show that in 1800 there were only 1,941 whites and 116 colored. In 1804 there were 11,141 whites and 734 colored. Instead of 1 District there were 4; instead of 11 traveling preachers, they now numbered 45. So wonderfully had the work extended and the membership multiplied, that we are constrained to say, "What hath God wrought!" Our McKendree had contributed in a large degree to this unparalleled success, and, with his noble colleagues, deserves to be held for ever in grateful remembrance by the Church.

On May 7, 1804, the fourth regular General Conference began in Baltimore, and closed the 23d. Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat were present, and, of course, presided. One hundred and seven preachers took their seats as entitled to membership.* William Burke, Thomas Milligan, and John

* As Mr. McKendree was not present at this General Conference, its acts are not necessarily connected with his biography; yet it may not be out of place to say that the principal business of the session was a careful revision of the whole book of Discipline—that it was taken up *seriatim*, and every chapter and section calmly and critically reviewed, and passed by an almost unanimous vote. It was the general impression among the old-

Watson were from the Western Conference. It seems that Mr. McKendree had intended to go to this Conference, as every preacher who had traveled four years had a right to do; and that he received money to pay his expenses to it; but from some cause—probably because he thought it more important to stay and attend to his charge, or probably because he preferred to assist Mr. Burke—he declined going, and handed the money over to the latter, adding something from his own scanty purse.

It is impossible to estimate properly the importance of the service which this faithful and wise servant of Jesus Christ rendered to the cause of religion, and of Methodism, without considering the peculiar state of things in the West about this period. The revival which began in 1799, and spread like a mighty inundation during several years until it extended over nearly all the populated sections of the West and South-west, and aroused the whole Methodist family in Europe and America to new and more vigorous efforts, seemed to have so excited the minds of many persons upon the subject of religion as to offer an occasion

est and most influential members of the body, that the General Conference ought to be constituted on the plan of an equalized representation, according to a proper ratio, with delegated powers. Indeed, it seems this was the prevailing sentiment, but, inasmuch as it had not been expected by all the Annual Conferences that this change would now be made, and as no plan had been matured or was presented for this purpose, nothing decisive was done in 1804—leaving to the ensuing General Conference to arrange it.

for the operation of seceders, fanatics, and impostors. Not only was it necessary to defend the Church against the attacks of some of the old traveling preachers who sought to revolutionize it by openly advocating in the West Mr. O'Kelly's notions of Church-government, to sustain our doctrines against Calvinism and its Antinomian sequences, and the ordinances in opposition especially to the popular declamation on the subject of baptism, but it was equally necessary to guard against the excesses which too frequently accompanied this glorious revival of the work of God *—excesses which astonish and humiliate us who are so far removed from their transaction, but some of which it is even now far easier to denounce than to account for, and which were still more difficult to prevent while the whole community were like a forest agitated by a tempest. Unfortunately, some of those having a high reputation for piety, and even some eminent ministers of the gospel—especially among the Presbyterians—gave the sanction of their example to such unseemly bodily exercises as jerking, jumping, running, dancing, and barking. Many pious but mistaken persons identified these violent spasmodic actions with the revival itself, and were ready to doubt the piety of a preacher who might seek to prevent them. Alas for our boasted philosophy when we are suddenly brought under the influ-

* The Rev. Henry Smith, in his *Recollections of an Old Itinerant*, (p. 50,) bears his testimony to the value of Mr. McKendree's efforts in these respects.

ence of novel and powerful impulses! especially when subjects of a mysterious and spiritual character engross the mind. Excitable and superstitious natures, under such circumstances, are often swept from the moorings of reason and common sense, and drifted out into the dangerous sea of fanaticism. Such persons too often become the victims of the cold and selfish impostor, who, under pretensions to piety and zeal, opens in the temple of God a kind of moral brokerage, in order to speculate upon the errors and misfortunes of society! To add to the list of troubles, about this time a company of Shaking Quaker preachers, from New York, came among them with their new-fangled doctrines and high pretensions to spiritual impulses. Their pretended zeal and piety misled many persons, and among others several valuable Presbyterian ministers, and a number of unwary members. Mr. Rankin, who had been very active and useful in the great revival, abandoned the Presbyterian Church, and soon became a leader among them. About this time another portion seceded from the Presbyterian Church, who were called by different names—such as Marshallites, Stoneites, Schismatics, etc. These affected extraordinary zeal, denounced Confessions of Faith, Church-discipline, adopted immersion as the exclusive mode of baptism, and were understood to have imbibed sentiments derogatory to the divinity of the Redeemer, with other tenets which affect the essentials of Christianity. Here, again, Presbyterian ministers seem to have led off in these dangerous innovations. But amidst this convulsion

in the religious community, the Methodists kept on the even tenor of their way, adhering to their excellent Discipline, and uniformly teaching that system of doctrine which they had long since learned, and which was not only the popular but the useful doctrine of the revival.* William McKendree, although not distinguished like some of his associates as a "*revivalist*," in the popular sense of the term,

* The venerable Henry Smith narrates, in his *Recollections of an Old Itinerant*, the following facts in connection with this subject:

"By the recommendation of Dr. C——, Mr. McNamar, a Presbyterian minister, and, of course, a Calvinist, went to hear our McKendree. The subject that day was, the extent of the atonement and salvation by faith in Christ. Mr. McNamar was so charmed with the simple eloquence of the preacher and the force of his arguments, that he said in himself as he went home, This is a doctrine that is calculated to do good. It so wrought upon his mind that shortly afterward, perhaps the next Sabbath, he began upon the same heavenly theme in his own congregation, and the mighty power of God came down upon him and his congregation, and many of them fell to the floor under it—the preacher among the rest. To the congregation this was strange work, but not so strange to the Methodists, for, thank the Lord, we kept the fire burning in the midst of surrounding darkness and opposition. Some of the Methodists began to talk to those in distress, and also sung and prayed; but some of the elders (who were still on their feet) said, 'If it is the Lord's work, let him do his own;' but they replied, 'The Lord works by means,' and persisted. Some soon found peace, and began to rejoice. As there was some crowding among those who were down, one said, 'Do n't tread on Mr. McNamar.' He heard it, and cried out, 'Yes, let them tread on me, for I deserve it. O if I and my congregation had been called to judgment a few weeks ago, what would have become of us?' This (he adds) was the beginning of the revival in the Eastern part of Kentucky."—Pp. 53, 54.

yet was evidently and confessedly the leader and planner of their operations, the ablest defender of the doctrines and polity of the Church, and the chief conservator of its union and harmony. His counsels gave confidence, his presence inspired the timid with courage, and his self-sacrificing and consistent course exemplified and honored the character of Methodist itinerancy. With him as leader under God, the preachers and people felt certain of success.

Justice to his fellow-laborers requires it to be said that they were worthy of their captain. And surely, with Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat as chief counselors, and with such colleagues as William Burke, Learner Blackman, Jesse Walker, John Sale, Thomas Wilkerson, Henry Smith, Tobias Gibson, Jacob Young, Lewis Garrett, James Gwin, John Page, John A. Granade, John Watson, and others of like piety and zeal, the cause of God was in as safe hands as frail humanity often affords. And now that they have all passed away, with not a solitary exception—Gibson and Blackman having fallen early and suddenly, while Burke, Wilkerson, and Garrett have but recently sunk into the grave, as the sun goes slowly down on a long summer's eve—we may be excused from saying, that in labors, privations, practical sense, profound piety, true eloquence, and wonderful success in their holy calling, they were a *noble band*, and deserve to be held in perpetual remembrance. What if they lived poor,*

* From a memorandum-book, very neatly kept in Mr. McKen-

and died "unhonored and unsung"—their graves scattered all over the great valley where they toiled and "fell at their posts," with few stones to mark

dree's hand-writing, showing "moneys received from 1799 to 1804 inclusive," we make the following synopsis, premising that the salary of a preacher from 1784 to 1800 was \$64 per annum—equal to £19 4s.—and was raised to \$80 at the General Conference of 1800:

"Salary deficient four quarters 1799, on the Northern District of Virginia, £5 15s. 11d."

Within that period he charges himself with "private gifts worth £3 6s. 6d."—socks being valued at from 7s. 6d. to 6s. per pair—and then, out of the pittance of about \$40 which he received on a hard year's work, he "gave away to the poor, and other charitable objects," about \$10 more; so that he subsisted that year on \$30, or drew upon his own private funds for the remainder; and yet his cash account for that year shows that his actual cash-expenses amounted to £15 0s. 10½d., exclusive of traveling expenses, gifts, etc. This was almost double the amount he received in cash, clothes, etc.

His memorandum from 1800 to Oct., 1801, shows that, although his salary was raised to \$80 per annum, he only received *three* dollars the first quarter, and *two* dollars for the next. The whole deficiency of this year was £17 15s. 10d.—showing that he received during his first year's work as Presiding Elder in the West about *twenty dollars only*—all told—while his expenses in traveling from Virginia to the West, and for necessary clothing and fare, must have greatly exceeded this amount. His receipts for the next year amounted to \$43 67—making a deficiency of \$36 23 for 1802, etc., etc. Nor let it be forgotten that he charges himself in the above with all cash and clothing received as private gifts. Such was then the rule, and he always obeyed the law of the Church. Of course, traveling preachers who began to travel poor, remained poor while they itinerated. "As poor, yet making many rich—as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

their places of repose—yet their “record is on high,” and their recompense both sure and glorious. They trusted all to God; and will he not vindicate his own truthfulness? They loved the Church dearer than their own lives, and their names must never be forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

McKendree presides at the Western Conference, 1804—Bishop Whatcoat's death, 1806—McKendree in Illinois and Missouri—Review of the work in the West—Delegated General Conference needed—A Bishop wanted—New York plan to elect one—Defeated by Virginia Conference—General Conference, 1808—McKendree made Bishop—His qualifications—Dr. Coke's letter.

HAVING followed the history of the subject of this biography to the fall of 1804, we may pass along with the remark, that on the 2d of October of this year the Western Conference again met at Gerizim, near Cynthiana, Kentucky. Bishop Asbury having been taken ill on his way to the West, neither he nor Bishop Whatcoat, who accompanied him, was able to attend the session. The failure of the Bishops to reach the Conference, and also to designate any one to preside, devolved upon the Conference the election of its President, and Mr. McKendree, having received the vote of the Conference, performed the duties of the office most admirably. Several preachers were admitted on trial at this Conference who subsequently attained considerable notoriety, and most of whom are known to have been very estimable and highly useful men. Among them were Samuel Parker, the sweet singer in Israel, and a fine specimen of

“nature’s noblemen” improved by divine grace; Peter Cartwright, a fearless, rough, and ready man, who still lives, and has recently written his own biography; Miles Harper, my first colleague, a man of fine order of mind by nature—a revivalist, with rare gifts for declamation, a voice of unsurpassed melody, and of great physical capacity to sustain the labor of the saddle, the pulpit, and the altar, and who, if he had combined with all his other qualities greater self-command, might have stood among the foremost; James Axley, whose firmness verged on sternness, and his candor on rudeness, but withal a devoted, laborious, good man—kind of heart, honest in his prejudices, and eccentric from the want of early advantages; and Thomas Lasley, the humble and faithful preacher, and traveling companion of Bishop Asbury, who, with Gibson, Blackman, and Bowman, was a pioneer in Mississippi and Louisiana, whose long and useful life has but recently closed.

This, like all the other years of his itinerant life, seems to have been laboriously and efficiently employed in the duties of his holy office. The revival was still prevailing in many sections of the western country, and thousands were annually being converted to God. His District occupied all his time and energies, and the cause of God prospered.

On the 2d of October, 1805, Conference convened in Scott county, Kentucky. Bishop Asbury presided, and the session was a peaceful and happy one. Mr. McKendree was this year transferred to the Cumberland District, after having been five

years on the Kentucky District—for, although some slight changes had been made, yet it remained substantially the same work. And this seems to be a violation of the rule introduced in 1792, limiting a Presiding Elder's term of service on a District to four years. I cannot therefore explain it.

The Cumberland District was not only a new field of operations for him, but it was a much more extensive one, and embraced more of the frontier work; for it included not only all the populated portion of Middle Tennessee, but an appointment in Illinois also. The increase of members reported for this year justifies the conclusion that the preachers within the District were faithful and acceptable, and we doubt not the Presiding Elder did his part, as usual, of hard service.

The Western Conference for 1807 was held at Ebenezer Church, Greene county, East Tennessee, September 20, 1806, from which he was returned to the Cumberland District. Bishop Asbury attended this Conference, and in his Journal he says, "Sunday, 14th, I preached at the stand in the woods. Brother McKendree followed. It was a season of feeling. . . . Saturday, 20th, Western Conference began, and *ended on Monday*. There are fourteen hundred added within the bounds of this Conference—fifty-five preachers stationed—*all pleased*." Again, "The brethren were in want, so I parted with my watch, my coat, and my shirt." Bishop Whatcoat having died* in July, 1806, Bishop

* Richard Whatcoat was born in Gloucestershire, England,

Asbury preached his funeral-sermon at this Conference, as was his custom at all the Conferences of the year. This was a year of great labor and privation with Mr. McKendree, for he not only attended his regular appointments in a very large District, but made a missionary tour into Illinois and Missouri. Jesse Walker had been sent to Illinois, and John Travis to Missouri, and both appointments were attached to Mr. McKendree's District. The following narrative of this tour, by the Rev. James Gwin,* may be interesting to those who delight to trace the footsteps of the brave pioneer preachers:

"In the year 1807, Brother McKendree, A. Goddard, and myself set out to visit the settlements of

1736; became an itinerant preacher in 1769; came to the United States in 1784; was ordained by Mr. Wesley previously; assisted in the ordination of Mr. Asbury; was elected Bishop in 1800; and died in Dover, Delaware, 5th July, 1806, a holy, faithful man.

* The following statement appears in Bishop Asbury's Journal, relating to this beloved friend:

"*Wednesday, Sept. 23, 1808.*—Yesterday I returned to James Gwin's and preached here to-day with great delight to a very feeling congregation.

"Above all the persons of my acquaintance, Brother James Gwin has distinguished himself most friendly to my comfort. Understanding that I have a dependent father and sisters, he presented me with three hundred acres of excellent land, for which he only required me to advance an inconsiderable sum for the State charges, and farther takes upon himself the trouble of opening a plantation and building a cabin for their reception. O that the Father of mercies may remember and reward him and his for all his kindness to me!"

Illinois. We crossed the Ohio River, took the wilderness, and traveled until night. Not being able to get to any habitation, we camped out. Brother McKendree made us some tea, and we lay down under the branches of a friendly beech, and had a pleasant night's rest. Next morning we set out early, traveled hard, and got some distance into the prairie, and here we took up for the night. This was a night of trouble. After we had taken a morsel to eat and offered up our prayers to God, we lay down to rest and fell into a deep sleep. About eleven o'clock Brother McKendree awoke, and found our horses were all gone. After some search, we found they had passed over a small stream and had taken back the way we had come. Not knowing whether they had been stolen or had left of their own accord, leaving Brother McKendree at our camp, Brother Goddard and myself went in pursuit of them. As the night was dark, we got dry bark, which afforded us a tolerable light. We followed their tracks across the prairie, and overtook them about eight o'clock next morning, having traveled fifteen miles on foot. The next night we reached the first settlement—tarried a day there—and crossing Kaskaskia River, we reached Turkey Hill, and lodged with an old Brother Scott. Here we met with Jesse Walker, who had formed a circuit and had three camp-meetings appointed for us. After resting a few days, we set out for the first camp-meeting. In twelve miles we reached the Mississippi, and having no means of taking our horses across, we sent them back, crossed the river,

and, with our baggage on our shoulders, went to the camp-ground, having fallen in with Brother Travis on the way. About forty were converted at this meeting."

Here we have a specimen of the risks and fatigues endured by the Methodist itinerants in the West at that day. "There were giants in those days." Let us pursue the narrative.

"From this camp-meeting we returned across the river to Judge S.'s, who refreshed us and sent forward our baggage in a cart to Brother Garrettson's, where our next meeting was to be held—which was called the Three Springs. We arrived on Friday morning on the camp-ground, which was situated in a beautiful grove surrounded by a prairie. A considerable congregation had collected; for the news of the other meeting had gone abroad, and produced much excitement. Some were in favor of the work, and others were opposed to it. A certain Major had raised a 'company of lewd fellows of the baser sort' to drive us from the ground. On Saturday, while I was preaching, the Major and his company rode into the congregation and halted, which produced considerable confusion and alarm. I stopped preaching for a moment, and quite calmly invited them to be off with themselves, and they retired to the spring for a fresh drink of brandy. The Major said he had heard of these Methodists before; that they always broke up the peace of the people wherever they went; that they preached against horse-racing, card-playing, and every other kind of amusement.

However, they used no violence against us, but determined to camp on the ground and prevent us from doing harm. But at three o'clock, while Brother Goddard and I were singing a hymn, an awful sense of the divine power fell on the congregation, when a man with a terrified look ran to me and said, 'Are you the man that keeps the roll?' I asked him what roll. 'That roll,' he replied, 'that people put their names to who are going to heaven.' I supposed he meant the class-paper, and sent him to Brother Walker. Turning to Brother Walker, he said, 'Put my name down, if you please,' and then fell to the ground. Others started to run off and fell—some escaped. We were busy in getting the fallen to one place, which we effected about sunset, when the man who wished his name on the roll arose and ran off like a wild beast. Looking round upon the scene, and listening to the sobs, groans, and cries of the penitents, reminded me of a battle-field after a heavy battle. All night the struggle went on. Victory was on the Lord's side; many were converted, and by sunrise next morning there was the shout of a king in the camp. It was Sabbath morning, and I thought it the most beautiful morning I had ever seen. A little after sunrise, the man that had run off came back, wet with the dews of the night and with strong symptoms of derangement. At eleven o'clock Brother McKendree administered the holy sacrament; and while he was dwelling upon its origin, nature, and design, some of the Major's company were effected, and we had a melting time.

After sacrament, Brother McKendree preached to a large congregation, all the principal men of the country, and all in reach who could get there, being present. His text was 'Come, let us reason together,' and perhaps no man ever managed the subject better, or with more effect. His reasoning on the atonement, the great plan of salvation, and the love of God, was so clear and strong, and was delivered with such pathos, that the congregation involuntarily arose to their feet and pressed toward him from all parts. While he was preaching, he very ingeniously adverted to the conduct of the Major, and remarked, 'We are Americans, and some of us have fought for our liberty, and have come here to teach men the way to heaven.' This seemed to strike the Major, and he afterward became friendly, and has remained so ever since.

"This was a great day. The work became general—the place was awful, and many souls were born of God. Among the rest was our wild man. His history is a peculiar one. He lived in the American Bottom, had a fine estate, and was a professed deist. He told us that, a few nights before we passed his house, he dreamed that the day of judgment was at hand, and that three men had come from the East to warn the people to prepare for it; that so soon as he saw us he became alarmed, believing we were those men; and having ascertained where we were from, who we were, and where going, he came to the camp-meeting. He became a reformed and good man."

Brother Gwin's narrative continues: "We went

to Goshen Camp-meeting. Here we had comfortable camps, and an arbor large enough to shelter seven hundred persons, in the form of an L. The stand was in an unsheltered spot, between the two squares. We had also a small log meeting-house, in which our first quarterly-meeting was held. Preaching began on Friday, and was kept up regularly. The people having heard of the revival at the other meetings, flocked out in great numbers, many to see the strange work. Some brought brandy and cards for their amusement during the meeting. On Friday and Saturday the word preached seemed to do little good. An awful cloud seemed to rest upon us. In passing the door of the preachers' tent, I saw Brother McKendree alone, bathed in tears. I stepped in, and he said to me: 'Brother, we have been preaching for ourselves and not for the Lord. Go, brother, and preach Christ crucified to the people.' My heart was deeply affected. We fell upon our knees and implored the help of God. This was about sunset. I preached at candle-lighting. My text was, 'Behold the man.' It commenced raining shortly after I began to preach; and, as the audience was under shelter, I did not stop, although exposed to the rain. My heart was fired and my tongue loosened in an unusual manner. For a few moments nothing but sobs and sighs were heard among the people; at length the whole congregation seemed suddenly smitten with the power of God. Many fell as in battle, and were presently raised, to tell of pardoning mercy, and encourage others to seek the Lord.

We continued all night in the work. On the next day—Sunday—nine o'clock A.M., the Lord's-supper was administered. It was a memorable day, and eternity only will reveal the result. One conversion deserves particular notice. An Indian, of the Chickamauga tribe, on a hunting trip, fell in with us at our camp-meeting. I will give his own account of his conversion—he said: 'When I saw so many people, I thought I would stop and get some whisky; and while you were talking in the rain, I was standing by a sapling, and there came on me a mighty weight, too heavy for me to stand under. I caught the sapling, but my hands would not hold it, and I fell to the ground: while there, blackness came over me; I tried to get away, but could not until about daylight. I thought surely I had been drunk; but then I remembered I had nothing to drink, although I concluded not to go back; yet when they began to sing, something drew me back, and before I knew it, I was among them again, and then the same weight came on me, and the darkness; I fell to the ground and thought I was about to die. I tried to get up, but was too weak. At last a white man came and talked over me, and while he was talking, it got lighter and lighter, and every thing looked whiter than the sun could make it look. The heavy load and the blackness all left me; *I felt glad in my heart*, and jumped up and felt light!'" Brother Gwin says that he saw the poor savage when he arose, and as he knew but few English words, he cried in ecstasy, "*Good, good, good!*"

The narrator adds, that arrangements were made to send this Indian to school; that he soon learned to read and write, and that at the last account of him he was trying to "walk in the light."

"On Monday, the last day of the meeting, *one hundred joined the Church.*"

Mr. McKendree has also left a concise reference to this tour, in which he notices the following facts: The camp-meeting they attended across the Mississippi River, and consequently, in the present State of Missouri, was the first meeting of the kind ever held on the north-west of the Mississippi River, and that they walked about forty miles in getting to it. He farther says: "Four Sabbaths excepted, I have attended popular meetings every week since the beginning of February, in which time I have rode about 2,700 miles through the wilderness to the Illinois and back, spent considerable time in the most sickly part of that and this country, and yet, blessed be God, my health and strength have been preserved." This trip occupied about two months, and was the commencement of a glorious revival across the Ohio, and upon both sides of the Mississippi.

Such was the manner of life of the devoted McKendree and of his indefatigable and heroic associates, such their faith and zeal, and such the wonderful success with which God crowned their "labor of love."

The ensuing Conference was held in Chillicothe, Ohio, September 14, 1807. Bishop Asbury, then our only Bishop in America, was present, and says

of it: "On Monday we opened our Conference in great peace and love, and continued until Friday. A delegation of seven members was chosen to the General Conference. There were thirteen preachers added, and we found an addition of two thousand two hundred members to the Society in these bounds; seven deacons were elected and ordained, and ten elders; two preachers only located, sixty-five were stationed."

Mr. McKendree was doubtless reappointed to the Cumberland District, but as the General Conference, which changed his relation, came on before the Minutes were published, the name of his successor, James Ward, is put down as its Presiding Elder.

As this year closes the labors of Mr. McKendree as Presiding Elder, let us briefly review the progress of the Church in the West since he took charge of the only District it contained in 1800. Then there were 1,741 members, white and colored; now (*i. e.*, 1808) the Western Conference numbered 16,887 members. Then Mr. McKendree was the leader of the only band—a forlorn hope, cut off from the rest of the work by an extensive wilderness, full of warlike and cruel savages, having only eleven preachers. In 1808, that one District had expanded into *five*, with sixty-six preachers; and the cause of God was advancing and gaining firm footing throughout the vast Valley of the Mississippi. The Methodism planted by the heroic and holy pioneer preachers in this region was truly *Wesleyan*; no wild and spurious offshoot of the

original stock, producing fanaticism and degrading its disciples, but a genuine root of the true vine which Paul planted, Apollos watered, which Luther pruned, and Wesley nourished, and whose fruitful foliage was now rapidly spreading over England, the West Indies, and the great Western Continent. Its fruit was healing the chronic ulcers of the nations. It introduced order, social and moral, it subdued the vices, restrained the passions and vitiated appetites, refined the taste, enlightened the minds of men, and spread peace and happiness through society. It instituted an unequalled system of propagandism—the very plan introduced by the great Master himself, and called forth the moral heroism of martyrs in its ministers. Its doctrines were scriptural, its forms and ceremonies simple and significant, its spirit catholic, its discipline strictly evangelical, and its system of government subordinated to the great cardinal object of spreading scriptural holiness over all lands by an *itinerant* ministry. No wonder it succeeded; it would have been far more wonderful if it had not. Every attribute of the Godhead was on its side, and every intercession of the world's Redeemer was virtually a prayer and a pledge of its triumph. The highest interests of humanity were involved in its efforts, and some of the purest and noblest of earth sacrificed their earthly all in its behalf.

At the Western Conference held in Chillicothe, Ohio, in September, 1807, to which we have already adverted, seven delegates were elected to represent the body in the approaching General Conference,

five of whom attended it. They were William McKendree, William Burke, John Sale, Benjamin Lakin, and Elisha W. Bowman. The New England Conference also sent seven representatives, while from New York there were nineteen; South Carolina, eleven; Virginia, eighteen; Baltimore, thirty-one; and Philadelphia, thirty-two—making in all one hundred and twenty-five, instead of one hundred and twenty-nine, as stated by Dr. Bangs and Dr. Lee, both of whom give the Western Conference *eleven* instead of *seven*.*

The General Conference which began† May 6, 1808, in Baltimore, was the most important session which had ever been held. The organization of the Church, so far as respects the inauguration of the Episcopal form of government by the Christmas Conference of 1784, which was hastily convened, and, of course, was not a general attendance of the preachers, particularly as to the Conferences remote from the place of its session, was certainly an important event, whether we call it a General or Special Conference. Its acts were acquiesced in by the whole Church, and were authoritative. But it was soon evident that, in order to give unity, harmony, and efficiency to the Church, something more

* Bangs's History M. E. Church, Vol. II., p. 195; Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee, p. 431; Asbury's Journal, Vol. III., p. 268; Life of Bishop Roberts by Dr. Elliott, pp. 156-8; Life of Bishop Hedding, p. 171.

† Dr. Bangs and Dr. Clark have both erred as to this date. See History M. E. Church, Vol. II., p. 195; Life and Times of Bishop Hedding, p. 171.

was indispensable; for however unanimous in doctrines and in the outlines of Church-polity the preachers and members appear to have been, and really were, and however strong their attachment to the Bishops, as general superintendents of the whole work, yet while each Annual Conference claimed the power to change any part of the Discipline, not excepting even the Articles of Faith—the basis of their organization—it must be evident that some other and stronger bond was necessary than yet existed to insure permanent union. The itinerant general superintendency feature of the system was, it is true, a highly conservative element, and the respect and regard felt by all for the character of Mr. Asbury was a guaranty against a disruption of the body, except under strongly-exciting circumstances. Such circumstances might arise, and that good and far-seeing man, in common with other wise and devoted friends of the Church, felt exquisitely the importance of introducing the principle of representation into the government, and by restricting the Conferences in their separate capacity from the exercise of a direct power over fundamental questions, to concentrate this authority, under constitutional provisions, in the representative body. The condition of the Church at this period was somewhat similar to that of the civil government of the thirteen colonies during the Revolutionary War, and until the formation and adoption of the Federal Constitution. And as the highest principles of patriotism induced Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Jay, and

Madison to advocate a Constitutional Union in the place of the old Confederation, so, actuated with the highest sense of piety and duty, our Asbury, Lee, McKendree, Bruce, Burke, Cooper, Soule, and Garrettson united their efforts to concentrate the law-making department of the Church in a General Conference, under constitutional "limitations and restrictions."

The conviction was so strong among the older and wiser members of the Connection, that, as we have seen, "the Council" system was introduced with a hope that it would answer the ends proposed. But it failed in 1792, not less from its own intrinsic imperfection than on account of the opposition it encountered from Mr. O'Kelly. In the General Conference of 1804, the propriety of a delegated representative body was felt and admitted, but as the preparatory steps had not been taken for the immediate introduction of the principle, by common consent the plan was deferred until 1808, when all the Conferences could meet the question after mature deliberation. It was therefore understood throughout the whole Church, that at this Conference the organization of the Church should be completed by some general measures which would effect a centralization of power in a delegated body having supreme legislative jurisdiction. Indeed, the sense of insecurity was so strongly and generally felt in reference to the Episcopacy itself, after the death of Bishop Whatcoat in 1806, and the failure of the health of Bishop Asbury, consequent upon the excessive fatigue and anxiety devolved

upon him, that many of the preachers thought it advisable to call a special convention of seven delegates from each Conference, for the exclusive object of electing another Bishop, lest the death of Mr. Asbury before the General Conference of 1808 might endanger the stability of the Church. With this view, "a plan agreed upon by the New York Conference, to organize and establish a permanent Superintendency over the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and recommended to the other six Conferences for their concurrence," was carried round to the Conferences, and laid before them by Bishop Asbury. This plan proposed that the forty-nine delegated members, or electors, should convene in Baltimore, July 4, 1807, "for the express purpose, and with full powers, to elect, organize, and establish a permanent Superintendency, and for no other purpose." The original document now lies before the writer.

"Signed by order and in behalf of the unanimous voice of the Conference.

"FREEBORN GARRETTSON, "EZEK. COOPER, "SAMUEL COATE,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
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"FRANCIS WARD, *Sec'y.*

"Done at New York, May 22, 1806."

Appended to this circular are the following interesting entries in the autographs of the subscribers:

"The New England Conference concur with the proposal made by the New York Conference, for

calling a delegated General Conference on July 4, 1807, for the express purpose of strengthening the Superintendency. Yeas, 28; nays, 15.

“THO. BRANCH, *Sec’y.*”

“The Western Conference concur with the proposal made by the”—etc., etc. “Unanimity.”

“WM. BURKE, *Sec’y.*”

“The South Carolina Conference concur”—etc. “Two members only excepted.”

“LEWIS MYERS, *Sec’y.*”

“*Virginia Conference*, Newbern, Feb. 6, 1807.—The New York Conference having written a circular letter to the several Annual Conferences, proposing a plan to strengthen the Superintendency, the letter was read in this Conference yesterday, and a vote taken—‘Shall we consider the subject?’ Only seven were in favor of the motion. The subject was called up again to-day, and a second vote was taken: fourteen were in favor of it. It is therefore the decision of Conference not to be concerned in it.

“Signed in and by order of the Conference.

“P. BRUCE,

“JESSE LEE,

“THOS. L. DOUGLASS, *Sec’y.*”

“There were 34 members at the Conference; 33 were present when the vote was taken, and the absent member said he would have voted for it if he had been in the room.

“THOS. L. DOUGLASS, *Sec’y.*”

There is also an original paper, under date of Newbern, North Carolina, Feb. 8, 1807, expressing the dissent of *Philip Bruce, Stith Mead, Thomas L. Douglass*, and *John Buxton* to the action of the Virginia Conference in refusing to take into consideration the circular of the New York Conference. "It appearing to us both injudicious and impolitic to refuse hearing a debate on any thing which so nearly concerns the general welfare and union of our Church, more especially as we must from principle avow the propriety of equal representation; secondly, respecting their refusing to hear the letters from our brethren composing the six preceding Conferences to ours in answer to Dr. Coke," etc. They, however, attribute the course pursued by the Conference "to the state of our Conference, being composed of more than one-third young men, and the vehement outcries of 'Rebellion'—'Worse than Burr'—'Of Forswearing'—'Dividing the Connection!' etc., etc., raised by two of our elder brethren, (J. Lee and D. Hall,) which so alarmed the young men that they were afraid to hear or see the letters, or submit to the debate upon the address from New York."

Mr. Lee's resistance of this measure has been justified by the results of the General Conference ensuing, and vindicated by his able biographer. It was an extraordinary measure to meet a contingency which did not occur before the meeting of the body which had the legal control of the question, and might have been a dangerous precedent. And it may well be feared that if this evident neces-

sity for General Conference action had been anticipated in 1807, the attempt to introduce the representative principle in 1808, and to impose a constitutional check both upon the Annual and General Conferences, might not have been successful, inasmuch as their necessity would not have been so imperatively felt. So that, however grieved Mr. Asbury may have been at the defeat of this attempt to *call* a General Conference, yet, as it resulted in rendering evident the indispensableness of a delegated General Conference to the permanency, unity, and efficiency of the Church, and thus contributed to this most important result, neither he nor others could regret the failure. I confess, however, I have not found any evidence that Bishop Asbury felt very great solicitude about the matter—certainly there is none in the remarks made in his Journal about the Virginia Conference, for there is not the remotest intimation that he “labored” at all for that “*dangerous plan*,” much less that he “labored hard” for it.

The failure of the New York plan by the non-concurrence of the Virginia Conference, did not deter the former Conference from sending a Memorial to the General Conference in favor of organizing a delegated body to meet at regular periods. The vast extent of the work, the number of elders, each of whom was entitled to a seat, the loss of time, the great expense of all who should attend, the preponderance which the Central Conferences had always enjoyed and would always have in the number of members, besides the inutility of so

large a body for legislative purposes, and finally, the necessity for it as a bond of union to the several Annual Conferences, were clearly and strongly set forth. It was the great question of the Conference, and upon its fate rested the prosperity, if not the future existence, of the Church.

The Memorial was referred to a Committee of fourteen—two from each Conference. William McKendree and William Burke were chosen from the Western Conference. On Monday, the 16th, the Committee reported in favor of the measure, submitting a plan for a delegated General Conference substantially the same as that now found in the third section of the Discipline. Dr. Elliott, in his *Life of Bishop Roberts*, says: "On the first meeting of the Committee, they conversed largely on the provisions which their report to the Conference should contain. After considerable deliberation, they agreed to appoint a sub-committee of three to draft a report to be submitted to Conference—subject, however, to such additions or modifications as a future meeting of the whole Committee might see fit to make. The sub-committee consisted of *Ezekiel Cooper*, *Joshua Soule*, and *Philip Bruce*. When the sub-committee met, it was agreed, after a full exchange of sentiments, that each should draw up a separate paper comprising the necessary restrictions or regulations in the best way he could, and that each should present his form in writing, and they would then adopt the one deemed best, with such amendments as might be agreed upon. When the sub-committee met to examine their

plans, Mr. Cooper had his regularly drawn up, Mr. Soule also had one, but Mr. Bruce had nothing committed to writing. On comparing the two papers, Mr. Bruce fell in with the main points of the one brought forward by Mr. Soule. Mr. Cooper pleaded for his own with his usual ability, but he finally agreed to Mr. Soule's plan, with some slight additions or amendments suggested by the others. At the next meeting of the whole Committee, although the plans of Messrs. Cooper and Soule were both before them, Mr. Soule's was adopted by all the members, with some slight modifications."

Suffice it to say, that when the report came before the Conference, a long and animated debate ensued. Some were in favor of representation by *seniority*, and others of the *election* of delegates. The report favored the elective principle, and the remote Conferences were generally in favor of it, but the central ones, such as Baltimore and Philadelphia, were opposed to it. It was rejected on the 18th, by 57 yeas, 65 nays.* Very great dissatisfaction was

* Mr. Cooper's plan differed from Mr. Soule's on the third Article, by saying, "They shall not do away Episcopacy, *nor reduce our ministry to a Presbyterial parity*;" while Mr. Soule's was as it now stands in the Discipline. The Committee of fourteen approved the latter, and reported it to the Conference. The prominent advocates of Mr. Cooper's plan in the Conference were himself and John Wilson. Mr. Lee is understood to have opposed the whole thing upon the plea of "Conference-rights," leading to "electioneering," etc., and to have defeated it temporarily by advocating *seniority* in preference to the *election* of delegates. When the subject was reconsidered, Mr. Soule, seconded by George Pickering, moved to amend the first Article by inserting "senior-

manifested at this decision, and the New England and Western members having previously agreed to leave upon the failure of this effort, the New England delegates arose and asked leave to retire and return to their work, as they could be of no farther use in the Conference—giving assurance, at the same time, that they would not create any difficulty in the Church, but peaceably go home and attend to the duties of their work. Wm. Burke arose and made the same request for the Western Conference delegates. Six members from New England and two from the West retired in a body, and began to make preparations for their journey. But Bishop Asbury and Mr. McKendree sought an interview with them and others sympathizing with them, and, aided by the wise and prudent Elijah Hedding, prevailed on them to wait a day and see if a reconsideration of the question could not be effected leading to a different result. They did remain: the report was again taken up. The delegates from the Central Conferences—two of which constituted almost a majority of the whole body—saw that it was necessary to adopt it to save the integrity of

ity or choice"—thus leaving the mode of obtaining the delegate to the discretion of the Conferences. Mr. Lee was silent after this, and it passed by a large majority. The biographer of Mr. Lee, to whom the writer feels deeply indebted for his able and reliable work, claims that the *third* Restrictive Article originated with Mr. Lee. This error may be readily accounted for by the fact that Mr. Lee moved its adoption in Conference, as Mr. Soule had reported it. But Bishop Soule *undoubtedly originated it*. The above explanations are from the lips of Bishop Soule himself.

the Church; and after mature deliberation and considerable discussion, a compromise was agreed upon between Messrs. Soule and Cooper, representing the elective and seniority parties, by giving to the Annual Conferences respectively the right of selecting their delegates in either way, and then the general plan of a delegated Conference was adopted almost unanimously. And it is a striking illustration of the undue importance sometimes given to a mere abstraction to an impracticable principle, that no Annual Conference has ever sent a delegate to any General Conference since then, upon the ground of seniority, and yet this was the point upon which the whole question mainly hinged at last.

“Thus,” says Dr. Elliott, “to a very considerable extent we owe to Bishop Soule the restrictive regulations—or rather, the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church—which exhibits a degree of wisdom and prudent foresight that characterizes men of the first mental powers. In fact, those who know Bishop Soule would expect from him the wise deliberation necessary to produce such a measure as the Constitutional Restrictions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.”*

Thus was this great measure consummated, and the harmony and unity of the Church secured, in so far as written constitutions and compacts can insure unity in civil or ecclesiastical bodies.

The very infirm state of Bishop Asbury's health, together with the absence of Dr. Coke and the death of Bishop Whatcoat, created a strong desire

* Life of Bishop Roberts, p. 159.

to "strengthen the Episcopacy," by the election of one or more Superintendents. And after a motion had been made to elect the Presiding Elders by the Conferences, instead of their being appointed by the Bishop, and another to elect seven Bishops, (one to each Conference,) and still another to elect two, and they had all failed by a strong vote, it was finally moved, and carried almost unanimously, to elect and consecrate *one*. On the same day—*i. e.*, 12th May, 1808—the Conference proceeded to vote by ballot, and it was found that out of one hundred and twenty-eight members present, William McKendree had received ninety-five votes, and was therefore declared elected; and on the 18th of May* he was consecrated, in Light Street Church, by Bishop Asbury, assisted by the Rev. Messrs. Freeborn Garrettson, Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, and Thomas Ware.

The following is a copy of his Certificate of Ordination:

"Know all men by these presents, that I, Francis Asbury, originally of Great Britain, in great Barr Staffordshire, the Parish of Handsworth, for some years a member of the Methodist Society, and a local preacher; afterwards a member of the British Conference. In the year 1771 I came a Missionary to the British Provinces in America: afterwards General Assistant, and I had the oversight of the Methodist Society's. On the 27th day of Decem-

* Dr. Bangs, Dr. Lee, Dr. Clark, Benjamin St. James Fry, etc., etc., all mistake the day of his ordination.

ber, 1784, at a General Conference in Baltimore, after being ordained Deacon and Elder, I was elected to the office of Superintendent or Bishop, by the unanimous voice of the General Conference held in Baltimore, December 24, 1784. The following persons assisted in my ordination, viz., Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law of Jesus College in the University of Oxford, Presbyterian of the Church of England, Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, by the ordination and appointment of Mr. John Wesley, and other clergymen of the Church of England; also assisted in the ordination, William Otterbine, Minister of the German Presbyterian Church, and Richard Whatcoat with Thomas Vasey, regularly ordained Elders by John Wesley: these four solemnly set me apart for a Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. AND now be it known to all whom it may concern, that WILLIAM McKENDREE was ordained Deacon in the year 1790, and I did set him apart to the office of an Elder by my hands, in December of the year 1791. I HAVE, this eighteenth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and eight, set apart William McKendree,* by the laying on of hands and prayer, assisted by Freeborn Garrettson, Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, and Thomas Ware, all of them Elders in the Church; to the office and work of a Superintendent or Bishop of the Methodist

* Born in King William county, State of Virginia, July 6th, 1757.

Episcopal Church, (after he had been elected by a majority—*i. e.*, 95 out of 128 members of General Conference,) as a man whom we judge well qualified for the office of a Superintendent, and one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and fit to preside over and Feed the Flock of Christ, so long as his spirit, practice, and doctrine is such as becometh the Gospel of Christ, and he shall submit to the Discipline and order of the said Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

“And I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and eight.

“FRANCIS ASBURY. [seal.]

“JESSE LEE,

“FREEBORN GARRETTSON,

“THOMAS WARE,

“PHILIP BRUCE.

“Done in Light Street Church, BALTIMORE, State of MARYLAND.”

The historian of the Church, the venerable Dr. Bangs, to whom the whole Methodist family in America is indebted for his able and impartial labors in this department, as well as for his valuable services in promoting the general interests of the Church in other respects, thus speaks of this election:

“Mr. McKendree had been commended to the attention and approbation of the Conference by a long, laborious, and faithful service in the itinerant field of labor, during which time God had set his seal to his ministry in a most remarkable man-

ner. . . . It was from this field of labor (the West) that Mr. McKendree came to the General Conference in 1808. And such was the confidence inspired in his wisdom and integrity, in his zeal and prudence in promoting the cause of God, and such a halo of glory seemed to surround his character, that the finger of Providence appeared to point to him as the most suitable person to fill the office of a Superintendent.”*

When Mr. McKendree entered the Conference, he had been so long and so far from the central part of the Church, that his old friends were not prepared to appreciate the improvement he had made, while to the younger members of the body he was almost unknown even by name; so that none but his recent colleagues and Bishop Asbury were aware of his powers as an orator and a divine—powers which had been matured by self-denial, close study, and the constant practice of earnest, prayerful, evangelical sermonizing, amidst the hardships and dangers of a hardy pioneer life. But having been appointed to preach at the Light Street Church on the Sabbath before the Conference began, he tremblingly complied. Dr. Bangs thus describes the speaker’s manner, the occasion, and the result:

“The house was crowded with strangers in every part, above and below, eager to hear the stranger; and among others, most of the members of the General Conference were present, besides a number of colored people who occupied a second gallery in

* Bangs’s History M. E. Church, Vol. II., pp. 236-238.

the front end of the church. Mr. McKendree entered the pulpit at the hour for commencing the services, clothed in very coarse and homely garments, which he had worn in the woods of the West, and, after singing, he kneeled in prayer. As was often the case with him, when he commenced his prayer he seemed to falter in his speech, clipping some of his words at the end, and occasionally hanging upon a syllable, as if it were difficult for him to pronounce the word. I looked at him not without some feeling of distrust—thinking to myself, ‘I wonder what awkward backwoodsman they have put in the pulpit this morning, to disgrace us with his mawkish and uncouth phraseology?’ The feeling of distrust did not forsake me until some minutes after he had announced his text, which contained the following words: ‘For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?’ Jer. viii. 21, 22. His introduction appeared tame, his sentences broken and disjointed, and his elocution very defective. He at length introduced his main subject, which was to show the spiritual disease of the Jewish Church, and of the human family generally; and then he entered upon his second proposition, which was to analyze the feelings which such a state of things awakened in the souls of God’s faithful ambassadors; but when he came to speak of the blessed effects upon the heart of the

balm which God had prepared for the healing of the nations, he seemed to enter fully into the element in which his soul delighted to move and have its being, and he soon carried the whole congregation away with him into the regions of experimental religion.

“Remarking upon the objections which some would make to the expression of the feelings realized by a person fully restored to health by an application of the ‘sovereign balm for every wound,’ he referred to the shouts of applause so often heard upon our national jubilee, in commemoration of our emancipation from political thralldom, and then said, ‘How much more cause has an immortal soul to rejoice and give glory to God for its spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin!’ This was spoken with a soul overflowing with the most hallowed and exalted feelings, and with an emphasis that was like the sudden bursting of a cloud surcharged with water. The congregation was instantly overwhelmed with a shower of divine grace from the upper world. At first, sudden shrieks, as of persons in distress, were heard in different parts of the house, then shouts of praise, and in every direction sobs and groans. The eyes of the people overflowed with tears, while many were prostrated upon the floor or lay helpless on the seats. A very large, athletic-looking preacher, sitting by my side, suddenly fell upon his seat, as if pierced by a bullet—and I felt my heart melting under emotions which I could not resist.

"After this sudden shower, the clouds were dispersed, and the Sun of righteousness shone out most serenely and delightfully, producing upon all a present consciousness of the divine approbation; and when the preacher descended from the pulpit, all were filled with admiration of his talents, and were ready to 'magnify the grace of God in him,' as a chosen messenger of good tidings to the lost—saying in their hearts, '*This is the man whom God delights to honor.*'"

Bishop Asbury, who was present, was heard to say that the sermon would make him a Bishop, and his prophecy was verified on the 12th of May, for upon that day he was elected, it being the same day upon which the resolution passed to elect *one*. The majority by which he was elected was the largest any Bishop has ever received, except Bishop Asbury. He was the first native American elected to that office in the Methodist Church, and was fifty-one years of age.

However inexpedient it may appear for a Church to elect a man to an office so important upon an impulse, apparently so sudden, yet in the present case the selection was wise. With the exception of Mr. Asbury, no preacher in the Connection combined so many qualifications for the office. His piety was deep and uniform; he was single-hearted, magnanimous, generous, and of most refined and exquisite sensibility. With the discipline and government of the Church he was thoroughly acquainted; probably more familiar with ecclesiastical law than any of his contemporaries. As a preacher, he was in-

ferior to none in the clear comprehension and able advocacy of doctrines, in lucid and natural description of religious emotions, and in close and searching application of Christian ethics to their practical developments in the daily walks of life, while in the power and effectiveness of his ministrations he stood as a prince among his brethren. Nor was there any rudeness in his manners. He had enjoyed the benefit of highly-cultivated society in the Old Dominion—was acquainted with the courtesies of social life, and without sacrificing the simplicity of his character, there was something in his manners which won the esteem of all with whom he came in contact, and impressed them with the conviction that while he was a true gentleman, he was also a true and noble specimen of a Christian minister. His fine personal appearance—about six feet high, exquisitely proportioned—his beaming, prominent, mild dark eyes, black hair, delicate, white skin, and noble Grecian contour of face and forehead, were remarkably prepossessing. His voice was clear, soft, and highly musical; and when, in his happiest moments in the pulpit, I have looked into his face, all radiant with intellect, and smiling in every feature, with the reflected piety and benignity of his full and happy soul, and listened to the accents of that most lute-like and persuasive voice, I have thought that I never heard such a voice, or so felt the charm of truth and the attractions of piety. The *whole man* seemed to speak. And then there were associated with the words he uttered his long, self-sacrificing career, his unsuspected purity

of life, his un murmuring submission to hardships for the purpose of preaching Christ, and his daily exemplification of the power and loveliness of pure religion. Indeed, two thoughts seemed to have engrossed the man's nature. Other preachers occasionally seem to speak and act as if they have other important interests in this world apart from religion, but he seemed to have always in view only two great thoughts—*Christ and the Church*. To glorify God in the salvation of men, and build up the Church, were all he cared much about. Every thing else seemed to him too trivial to excite his heart or engage his energies. Truly might he have said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

Such was the man called by the voice of the Church to the Episcopal office. How this unexpected honor affected him, we may conceive when we learn from the Rev. L. Garrett, that upon his election, at the late Western Conference, to preside in the absence of the Bishop, he wept like a child, and would fain have declined the distinction. Bishop Asbury, too, alludes to the dejection of "dear Brother McKendree" on account of his election to the Episcopal office. *His Diary is silent here*. He was like one stricken by a bolt from the sky, and was too much paralyzed with the unexpected event to sit down calmly and chronicle his own election. Great questions of duty, high and holy thoughts of love to God, his Church, and the salvation of his fellow-men, excluded all other considerations; and until these solemn questions were settled,

and he had fully given himself to the duties of his new and holy office, his pen refused to record his daily history. And even after he had entered upon his work and resumed his Diary, not one allusion did he make to this solemn event of that Conference until some time afterward.* He had wholly given himself to God, in obedience to the voice of the Church, and, with characteristic modesty, slips out of the city as soon as possible, and begins, or rather, renews his career of travel, toil, and suffering, never to end until "the weary wheels of life at last stand still." If he had sought the office, he would have been unworthy of it. But having neither sought nor expected it, he submitted "to be servant of all," and, with as little parade as possible, went about his Master's work.

Dr. Coke, so soon as he heard of the election of Mr. McKendree, wrote him the following congratulatory letter. For the first time he was not present at the General Conference, nor ever afterward visited the United States, the election of Mr.

* The following extract from his Journal, of a later date, shows his feelings at this period:

"At this General Conference my brethren saw proper to enlarge my sphere of action, and this at a time of life when, in my opinion, if any thing, it ought to be diminished. This necessarily increased my labors, multiplied my cares, and fixed me in a position to have more sorrow. At times I felt resolved not to submit, but when it came to the point, I was afraid to refuse; I dare not deny. And while still deeply conscious that I did not possess qualifications adequate to the important station, yet, confident of support from my brethren, and relying on divine aid, I reluctantly and tremblingly submitted."

McKendree superseding the necessity of his services here, while his time was fully occupied at home. And, although there is reason for thinking he might have preferred to make America his home, yet he cordially greets the brother who takes his place, and ingenuously bears his testimony to his fitness for the office :

“Tenby, South Wales, October 5, 1808.

To BISHOP MCKENDREE:—I write to you, my very dear brother and friend, not to congratulate you on your election to the office of a Bishop, (for I believe you regard not office nor honor any farther than you may serve God thereby,) but to express my regard for you, and the pleasure I feel (notwithstanding what I have written above) at your being united to my old and venerable brother, Asbury, in the great work in which he is engaged. I am persuaded God has chosen you to help my dear brother, and that you will go on with him in perfect union in blessing the American Continent under divine grace.

You are mild: you are moderately and properly reserved, and do not aim at an overbearing exercise of power. I have not had a large acquaintance with you, but your person and your voice are fresh to me, as if you were now with me in the same room, and I greatly mistake if I do not taste your spirit. Go on, brother, walking with God and united to him. Your field of action is great. You have, perhaps, ten thousand pulpits open to you. But the grand point, which must be engraven continually on your forehead, as it were, and *on your heart*, is the

harmony and union of the Methodist Connection in America. God bless you! My dearest wife joins me in love to you. Pray for us.

I am, very dear brother and friend, yours affectionately and faithfully,

T. COKE.

P. S. Please write to me.

Bishop Asbury, in his Journal, Vol. III., p. 280, alludes to the "electing of *dear Brother McKendree* assistant Bishop," and says: "The burden is now borne by two pair of shoulders instead of one; the care is cast upon two hearts and heads." Most willingly did he divide the *honors* of the Episcopacy with his colleague—the *labor* and *care* were worrying him to death.

CHAPTER IX.

1808 an era in Methodism—Bishop McKendree's first tour and first Conference at Liberty Hill—Action on slavery—The South Carolina Conference—First missions to slaves—Two Virginia Conferences—Philadelphia and New York Conferences—Steam-boat excitement—New England Conference—Camp-meetings at Pike Run, Zanesville, and Collins's Campgrounds—Western Conference at Cincinnati, September 30, 1809—Extracts from his Journal—Methodists taxed for benefit of Congregationalists in Connecticut—His presidency—Dr. Coke—His overture to Bishop White in 1791 explained and vindicated—His proposal to divide the work with Bishop Asbury—His death and character.

THE General Conference of 1808 gave very great satisfaction to the members and friends of the Church. It completed the work begun in 1784, by placing the Articles of Religion, the General Rules, and the Itinerant Episcopal Form of Administration, as well as the rights of preachers and members, beyond the control of the Annual and General Conferences, except under certain "*limitations and restrictions*," and reserving the Articles of Religion from their control for ever. This act, giving constitutional permanency to the fundamental principles of Methodism, was crowned by the substitution of a delegated representative body in the place of mass-meetings of the Elders. And then

the election and consecration of a man so universally respected and beloved as McKendree to be associated with Bishop Asbury, gave great confidence in the stability and harmony of the Church in future. *It was an era in American Methodism.* The Church had now placed herself in a position of internal peace as to any immediate cause of dissension, and of external union and strength, which quieted the fears of many an anxious heart, and called forth a general expression of gratitude to God from all her borders. The members of the Conference having dispatched their business with remarkable unanimity and affection, returned to their respective fields with fresh zeal and courage, having nobly done their duty to God and the Church; and the whole Connection seemed to enter upon the work with renewed vigor.

Immediately upon the close of the General Conference, Bishop Asbury, with Henry Boehm as his traveling companion, started through Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky, to the first Conference for the year, to be held near Nashville, Tennessee; while Bishop McKendree went through Western Virginia and East Tennessee, West Tennessee, crossed the Ohio River, passed through a portion of Illinois, and crossing the Mississippi River above its junction with the Missouri, entered the State of Missouri, and joined his old friend, Jesse Walker, in holding a camp-meeting, beginning on July 28, 1808, and pushing still farther west, crossing the Missouri River one hundred miles above its mouth, they held another

camp-meeting at Big Spring on the 12th of August.

His account of a part of this journey is as follows:

"*Saturday, 23d, Sunday, 24th, Monday, 25th, July, 1808*—Camp-meeting in Illinois Circuit, Indiana Territory.—On Tuesday morning last we left Kentucky, with four days' provisions for man and beast; crossed the Ohio River, and entered the wilderness. We were six in company—J. Ward, T. Lasley, Z. Maddox, M. Shelby, and J. White. *Lying out was no hardship*, but the water was extremely bad, and the flies intolerable. Some had attempted to go through the prairies, but had turned back, and advised us not to try it; but we resolved to go, trusting the Lord. On the third day the flies afflicted us sorely, when a kind Providence sent a strong breeze and blew them all away. After twelve hours a shower of rain succeeded, and blessed man and beast with water to drink.

"On Friday, a little after dark, we got to Brother Scott's in the settlement. The old people were gone to the camp-meeting, about fifteen miles off, but the children received and treated us kindly. On Saturday morning, one of the most affecting scenes I ever witnessed occurred. As we drew near to the encampment, about thirty of the neighbors fell in with us. We rode two deep, and a number of excellent singers went in front. We were all glad, and as we moved, they sang delightfully, 'with the Spirit, and with the understanding.' And as we approached, the congregation met us

with open arms, and welcomed us in the name of the Lord. The Lord was in our midst, and it was like sitting in a heavenly place." Many were converted at this meeting.

"*Saturday*, July 30, including *Monday*, Aug. 1—Camp-meeting in Missouri Circuit.—This is a frontier settlement, lying in the fork of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, where, until lately, the Methodists were unknown—it being under the Spanish and papal governments until transferred to us by the French. Last year we formed a circuit here, and the prospect of a gracious reformation was truly pleasing, until a preacher of the Baptist order, and another of those calling themselves Christians, came among the people, and stirred up such strife that the reformation seemed to be at a stand. But the Lord manifested himself at this meeting to their overthrow and the reviving of the work of grace."

"*Sunday*, Aug. 7th.—From the above camp-meeting we crossed the Missouri, and held a meeting near a French village; had a refreshing time; several were converted, and the meeting lasted till night. This place became the beginning of a circuit on this side of the river.

"I continued down the river, and crossed the Mississippi at St. Louis, and so upon the other side to Goshen. Here we had a solemn time. The people were dying of flux: seven open graves in the church-yard; one interred after we assembled."

"*Friday*, 12th–14th.—Camp-meeting at the Big Spring. The foundation of a good and great revival was laid at a camp-meeting when we visited

here last year. The people received us as angels of God, and the Lord blessed us with many conversions. On Monday, as the sun rose I preached, and then started for Kentucky. An Indian who got converted when I was here last year, and has taken up with the white people and gone to school, stood at a distance and looked on until he could refrain no longer; then rushed through the crowd, caught me around the neck, and cried aloud, saying, 'I see your face no more.' We rode forty-five miles, lodged in the wilderness, and rested in peace."

His tent at the camp-meeting up the Missouri was made by sewing the preachers' saddle-blankets together, and spreading them over a pole, supported by forks placed in the ground like soldiers' tents. One end of the tent was closed with green boughs, the other was left open, and in front of it a fire was made. His food was bread, and flesh broiled on sticks by the fire. Returning though the territories from the Big Spring Camp-meeting, and lying out in the forests two nights, he recrossed the Ohio River, attended a camp-meeting in Kentucky, and another at Fountain Head, Tennessee, on Aug. 26th, near the house of his old friend, James Gwin. Worn down with fatigue and exposure, he was taken sick, and for more than two weeks was able to do but little. On Sept. 24th, he joined Bishop Asbury at Strother's, and, passing through Nashville, came to Liberty Hill, where the Western Conference began, Oct. 1, 1808. "Thus in four months," says Bishop Soule, "he had rode on horseback fifteen hundred miles, a considerable part of

the journey without roads, bridges, or boats, "frequently swimming creeks and rivers, sleeping many nights in the woods, with heaven for his covering, and earth for his bed."

The first extensive frontier visit of a Methodist Bishop was attended with happy results. Many had conceived the Bishops to be men clothed with power dangerous to society. They had considered them ecclesiastical dignitaries, inaccessible to the people, surrounded with wealth and pomp, and ruling with almost absolute authority. Bishop McKendree's appearance and manners were well calculated to correct such views, and remove the prejudices formed under such misrepresentations. Thousands flocked to see and hear the "Methodist Bishop." But how were they disappointed! Instead of costly and fashionable costume, his dress was of the plainest mode and of common materials. Instead of austerity of manners and the signs of ecclesiastical power, they found him grave, but affable, familiar, and persuasive; gentle to all men, ready to participate with ease and sweetness of temper in the circumstances of the poor and afflicted, and ever intent upon diffusing happiness in every circle of society in which he moved.

The Conference at Liberty Hill was held at a camp-meeting—the preachers lodging on the encampment, while the Bishops, in view of Bishop Asbury's feeble health, stayed at the residence of Colonel Green Hill. This gentleman was an old acquaintance of theirs, an estimable local minister, a revolutionary officer, and a simple-hearted and

devoted Christian. The writer knew him well; spent the first night of his itinerant life at his house in 1817, and can never forget the godly counsel and fatherly treatment he received from this venerable man during the first year of his ministry. He lived to bring up a large and highly reputable family; several of his descendants, including a son and one or two grandsons, became useful preachers, and almost the whole large circle of his posterity have realized the truth of God's word, which promises the divine blessing to the "children's children" of pious parents. It is related of this excellent man, that during the Revolutionary War, when North Carolina, his native State, was overrun by the British, the Provincial Assembly committed its public treasure to his hands, and that by dodging and hiding from his pursuers, he succeeded in preserving it; and after all danger was over, restored every cent of it to the proper authority. And as his early life had been distinguished by integrity, patriotism, and piety, so his old age was venerable and useful. There is a moral beauty and sublimity in the gradual decline of a truly good and noble old man, who, passing away full of years, ripe in wisdom, and rich in grace, descends serenely and triumphantly into the grave, amidst the regrets and veneration of society. Such was the life and such the death of Green Hill. The writer and Mr. Hill's old friend, the Rev. Turner Saunders, preached his funeral-sermon on the spot where the Western Conference of 1808 was held.

"As there was but one Conference at that time

in the West, the traveling preachers collected here from Holston, Natchez, Opelousas, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, covering a vast field of labor—an immense theater for missionary enterprise. To supply this extensive and extending field of itinerant operations, some fifty-five preachers had been employed the preceding year. Many of these had been toiling on the frontier settlements, and had come hundreds of miles to Conference, fatigued with travel, enfeebled by affliction, exposure, and labor; bare of clothing; in money-matters almost penniless—really itinerant, houseless wanderers—but they brought cheering intelligence of opening prospects, of religious revivals, and growing spiritual prosperity.”* Bishop Asbury laconically says, “We have had 2,500 increase; there are seven districts, and a call for eighty preachers.”

At this Conference Bishop McKendree *began* the exercise of his office as President of an Annual Conference. Henceforth the whole United States and the British Provinces in Canada were the theater of his labors. He at once evinced remarkable ability in presiding over the Conferences, and in every other respect fully met the expectations of his friends. A better president never occupied the chair of an Annual or General Conference.

While the writer would gladly omit all allusion to the unfortunate subject of slavery in this work, if he could do so as a faithful biographer, it is perhaps

* Dr. Green, in Biographical Sketches, p. 112.

his duty to advert to it in this connection, premising his remarks with this single observation: *he recognizes Bishop McKendree's character as a legacy to the whole Methodist family in America*, and would not willingly and needlessly exasperate the already too much excited feelings of this family by aught he might say upon this topic. He would infinitely prefer to be a peace-maker to being a partisan.

The first Methodist Conference in this country was held in Philadelphia, June, 1773, but neither the "General Rules," which, in connection with the "Articles of Religion," constituted the basis of "our Society," nor any act of the first six Conferences, *contained a word on the subject of slavery*. And doubtless the clause which was substantially retained in these Rules so long, was not inserted by any Conference, but was an unauthorized interpolation effected by the famous "Council" in 1789.

As early, however, as 1780, the Conference began to discuss the subject, asking, "Ought not this Conference to require those *traveling preachers* who hold slaves to give promises to set them free?" And, in connection with a sweeping denunciation of slavery, the Conference "passed their disapprobation on all our *friends* who keep slaves, and advise their freedom." Here the matter rested without any express law upon the subject until the Conference which began at Ellis's Preaching-house, Virginia, April 30, 1784, and ended at Baltimore, May 28th following, when this action took place:

"*Ques. 12.* What shall we do with our *friends* that will buy and sell slaves?"

“*Ans.* If they buy with no other intention than to hold them as slaves, and have been previously warned, they shall be expelled, and permitted to sell on *no* consideration.

“*Ques.* 13. What shall we do with our *local preachers* who will not emancipate their slaves in the States where the laws admit it?

“*Ans.* Try those in Virginia another year, and suspend the preachers in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.”

Here for the first time the law and the penalty are clearly laid down. Again:

“*Ques.* 22. What shall be done with our *traveling preachers* that now or hereafter shall be possessed of slaves, and refuse to manumit them where the law permits?

“*Ans.* Employ them no more, making it obligatory upon ‘every member of our Society’ to emancipate his slaves, prescribing the age at which the slave shall be free, and adding, ‘No person holding slaves shall in future be *admitted into Society*, or to the Lord’s-supper, till he previously complies with these rules concerning slavery.’”

Two years are given to Virginians to consider the expediency of compliance. Again:

“*Ques.* 43. What shall be done with those who buy or sell slaves, or give them away?

“*Ans.* They are to be immediately expelled, unless they buy them on purpose to set them free.”

But at the ensuing Conference the execution of these rules was suspended—indeed, it is understood that Bishop Asbury, perceiving the harm

likely to result from them, advised the preachers not to execute them; long before the expiration of the year. These rules were dropped, and have never reappeared in the Discipline. Indeed, the whole subject was dropped until 1796; but in the meantime the General Rules were interpolated, as we have already stated, in 1789. The Conference in 1796 gave authority to the Annual Conference to adopt what course each might think proper within its own bounds, "respecting the admission of persons to official stations in the Church;" and, in case of future admission to official station, security was to be required of those who held slaves, for their emancipation, as the laws of the States and the circumstances of the case might admit. In 1800, the rule was introduced, requiring "any local preacher, who may become an owner of a slave, to emancipate him, conformably to the laws of the State, under the penalty of a forfeiture of his ministerial character."

The course pursued in 1804, on this subject, was less stringent than that of the two preceding General Conferences; and the General Conference of 1808 struck out of the Discipline all that related to slave-holding among *private members*, and substituted the following: "The General Conference authorizes each Annual Conference to form their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves."

Under this law, the Conference which met Oct. 1, 1808, at Liberty Hill, Tennessee, took up the subject, and, as they were somewhat at a loss what to do, they requested the Bishops to give them a written opinion upon the subject. Bishop Asbury pre-

sented and read a paper, suggesting caution and moderation, and discouraging legislation upon the vexed question. When he finished, there was an evident indication of dissatisfaction—indeed, it is said “*the audience hissed him.*” The good and wise old gentleman replied, suiting the action to the word, “O well! I can tear it up.”* Bishop McKendree then read his opinion, which substantially favored the rule that was so long in existence in the M. E. Church, and the Conference acted in accordance with his suggestions. Now, while fidelity to truth requires this exposition of Bishop McKendree’s views upon this subject, at that period of his life, it is equally due to him and to truth to say, we have evidence that he lived to greatly modify, if not, as the writer believes he did, change his opinion upon the propriety of ecclesiastical legislation upon the question of slavery.

In his Autobiography, p. 156, the venerable Joseph Travis, formerly of the South Carolina, and late of the Memphis Conference, relates the following incident in reference to the views of the Bishop in his later years:

“I well recollect, one day when we were alone, he [Bishop McKendree] smilingly turned round to me and said: ‘Brother Travis, what shall we do with this part of Holy Scripture? 1 Tim. vi. 1–7.†’ “Let as many servants as are under the yoke, account their own masters worthy of all honor; lest the

* The Rev. Wm. Burke is our authority for this incident.

† Mr. Wesley’s translation.

name of God and his doctrine be blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren: but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. *These things teach and exhort.* If any teach otherwise, and consent not to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is after godliness, he is puffed up knowing nothing, but being sick of questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, contentions, evil speakings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." I perceived the design of the question, and plainly answered it: the good Bishop did not demur nor oppose my views of the text. I verily believe that had Bishop McKendree been alive at the division of our Church, he unhesitatingly would, with Bishop Soule, have adhered to the Southern side. I was intimate with Bishop McKendree, knew his sentiments in full in relation to Church-government, as also his feelings for the Southern branch of the Church, and the public may rest satisfied that he was no Abolitionist."

We give an extract from a letter of Bishop Asbury to the Rev. T. L. Douglass, as it relates, in part, to this Western Conference and to Bishop McKendree; it is dated Nov. 2, 1808: "Prospects in the West exceedingly great. If we are correct, 3,437 increase; eighty-four preachers stationed; seven Districts, two of them new. We have a tract of country superior to the thirteen United States, now

under the oversight of the Western Conference. . . . Since (General) Conference, Brother Bishop McKendree has traveled, I presume, eighteen hundred miles through New Virginia, Kentucky, Indian Territory, to Missouri and Tennessee, East and West. Our Western Conference was held in camp order in the woods, seven days. Prospects in Missouri are great and good. *Bishop McKendree has magnified his office*, and penetrated farther to the West than I have, already. From the Western Conference we have traveled rapidly—we were chiefly together. We hope to strike off a thousand or twelve hundred miles before the South Carolina Conference.”

The Diary of Bishop McKendree shows that, in company with Bishop Asbury, he started from Liberty Hill the day after the Conference rose, and passing by Dr. Tooley’s, J. Winton’s, in East Tennessee, and through Buncombe county, North Carolina; and continuing eastward, crossing the south fork of Catawba, he attended a camp-meeting at Williamson’s on the 11th of November; thence turning into South Carolina, he preached at Devenport’s Meeting-house, at Sardis, Heath’s; Camden to James Rembert’s, in Sumter District, where he attended another camp-meeting, and thence went on to Charleston, where he remained preaching in the different Churches—*i. e.*, Cumberland and Bethel—from the 30th of November to the 12th of December. Bishop Asbury says that “Bishop McKendree was three days and nights on the Camden Camp-ground; and there was a powerful work among saints and sinners.”

From Charleston they went through Augusta to John Bush's, in Green county, Georgia, and opened the South Carolina Conference, at Liberty Chapel, next day—*i. e.*, December 26th. This, too, was a camp-meeting Conference, held in midwinter, closing on Jan. 1, 1809. *Three missionaries* were appointed at this Conference: "one (M. P. Sturdevant) to Tombigbee; one to Ashley and Savannah, and the country between; and one to labor between Santee and Cooper Rivers. . . . Here was the beginning of the missions to the slaves in South Carolina." People were there in tents, who had come one hundred and fifty miles. "Preaching and exhortations; singing and prayer, without intermission, on the camp-ground; two or three thousand present; many souls converted." Increase of members in the bounds of the Conference 3,088.

From the seat of the South Carolina Conference, the Bishop and Brother Boehm passed through Augusta and Camden, to Fayetteville, North Carolina, crossing at Cashaway Ferry, where they realized the "mercy of not being thrown into the river, like poor Hilliard Judge."

Continuing their route, and preaching at every opportunity, they visited Wilmington, Newbern, and Washington, and reached Tarboro, North Carolina, on the last day of January. The Virginia Conference began there on the next day. Bishop McKendree was now among his old acquaintances; preached admirably, and ordained the Elders. Bishop Asbury says there were but three married preachers in this large Conference. He notices the

fact that "the blacks are kept from us because their masters are afraid of the influence of our principles;" and very significantly asks, "Would not an *amelioration* in the condition and treatment of slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans than any attempt at their *emancipation*?" Ah! the question of "*practical good*" was rarely thought of in discussions upon this subject, by those who were not familiar with the difficulties which really environed it.*

The following characteristic notice of the manner in which a part, at least, of this long and tiresome tour was made, is given in Bishop Asbury's Journal:

"We are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise, in partnership, two Bishops of us; but it must be confessed that it tallies well with our purses. Well, but we have great news, and we have great times, and each Western, Southern, and the Virginia Conference will have one thousand souls truly converted to God. Is this not an equivalent for a light purse? And are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes; glory to God!"

Truly, *eighty dollars a year* must have been a scanty supply for the purse, when every cent which clothing and traveling apparatus cost, besides every other outlay, not really included in "traveling expenses," had to come out of it! But what was money or comfort to such men, in pursuit of ends so high and holy?

From Tarboro, North Carolina, Bishop Mc-

* This was written three years before the late war.

Kendree proceeded, through deep snow, to Harrisonburg, Virginia, calling at his father's, in Greenville county, Virginia, spending a day there and preaching twice on that day; thence through Petersburg and Richmond to Fort Republic. His Diary shows that on the 2d of March he opened the *Virginia* Conference at Harrisonburg, and that it closed on the 8th. The General Minutes show that the Virginia Conference had been appointed to meet at Tarboro, North Carolina, on the 1st of February; and we have seen that a Conference was held then and there, which Bishop Asbury calls the Virginia Conference, and both of the Bishops notice the fact that another Conference was held at Harrisonburg. Perhaps it had been previously agreed that for the convenience of the preachers traveling remotely from Tarboro, another session of the Virginia Conference should be held at Harrisonburg. The Appointments made at both places are published as belonging to the Virginia Conference. This is believed to have been the only instance of the kind which occurred after the election of Bishop McKendree.

The Bishops went from this place to Alexandria, "through deep snow, which fell on the 13th of March." Bishop McKendree preached on Prov. i. 23. On the 18th, to Georgetown; and Sabbath, the 19th of March, he preached in Washington City twice—his texts being Heb. x. 35, 36; Ezek. xviii. 3. He preached in Baltimore on the 21st, and next day at "The Point." His texts were Matt. vii. 3; 2 Cor. xv. 58. Thence, traveling and preach-

ing nearly every day, they went through Wilmington, Delaware, to Philadelphia, where the Conference began on the 3d of April, and closed on the 10th; Bishop McKendree preaching six times during the session.

From the Philadelphia Conference they proceeded North, passing through Burlington, Trenton, etc., to New York, which they reached on the 9th of May, and opened the Conference on the 10th. On the 12th Bishop McKendree preached in John Street Church, on 2 Cor. v. 20; on the 14th, at Bowery, on Rom. i. 16; in Brooklyn in the afternoon, on Rom. viii. 34; and again at John Street on the 19th, (being the last day of the Conference,) his text being 2 Cor. vii. 10.

From New York, where their "attention was strongly excited by the Steam-boat—a great invention"—they traveled every day—Sundays always excepted—from the 19th of May to the 14th of June, when they reached Monmouth, District of Maine, the seat of the New England Conference.

This trip, which occupied twenty-one days' traveling, can now be made in as many hours, and without any serious fatigue. In making it, they passed through Newcastle on the 22d of May; on the 30th, Middletown, Connecticut. On Sunday, the 3d of June, Bishop McKendree preached his first sermon in Boston—Ps. xxxiv. 19; the next day, in Lynn; on the 8th, in Portsmouth—2 Tim. iii. 5.

The New England Conference lasted five days. "Eighty-two preachers received appointments, forty

of whom composed the Conference." From Monmouth Bishop McKendree came through Canaan, Dartmouth, Lansingburg, Albany, and Schenectady, to Kingsbury, where he again fell in company with Bishop Asbury, who had come by another route—both of them having preached nearly every day since they parted at the New England Conference. Leaving Brother Boehm to accompany Bishop Asbury, Bishop McKendree passed on through Auburn, Geneva, and Greensburg, to "Dr. Wheeler's, on the fork of Youghiogheny," where he and Bishop Asbury attended Pike Run Camp-meeting, at which Bishop McKendree preached every day. The meeting was one of great usefulness. Thence, again parting with Bishop Asbury, (who proceeded to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,) he visited Washington and Middletown—attended a quarterly-meeting; came to Steubenville on the 24th of August, and to Zanesville, Ohio, on the 29th. On the 23d and 24th of September, he assisted in holding a camp-meeting near Chillicothe, preaching each day with decided effect. On the 13th of September he got to John Collins's, of precious memory, and spent from the 15th to the 18th inclusive at a camp-meeting at P. Gatch's. The next week he assisted at Collins's Camp-meeting, and on the 27th of September reached Cincinnati. Here the Western Conference began on the 30th of September—thus completing his first Episcopal tour of visitation to the Annual Conferences.

The following extracts from the Journal of Bishop McKendree, beginning at the close of the

New York Conference, May, 1809, may be interesting to many:

“On Wednesday, the 10th of May, Conference met in New York. We had much harmony, peace, and love among the preachers; but business was done in the most desultory manner, owing to an entire abandonment of manner, and a flood of words. There were some attempts to correct these errors, in order to facilitate business, but they proved ineffectual. However, we had a comfortable degree of the divine presence, but not many converted. About seven o'clock on Friday, the 19th, (Bishop Asbury's Journal erroneously says the 15th,) Conference concluded; and, in my opinion, the business might all have been done in six days.

“Here I met with a very unexpected act of kindness. Brother Sandford, from Belleville, finding I have to travel alone, presented me with his son Aaron, an amiable youth about seventeen years of age, to travel with me, and that too at his own expense.

“*Saturday*, May 20th.—We left New York after breakfast, in company with Joseph Crawford, and reached the White Plains in the afternoon. Here I had a full view of the ground and the situation of the armies where the battle was fought at this place.

“*Sunday*, 21st.—Preached in the meeting-house on the battle-ground; had a melting, comfortable time.

“*Saturday*, 27th.—My rides have been long. Rode through much rain; preached nine times, to small, lonely congregations, in the course of this week—

have enjoyed much peace of mind, but suffered some unnecessary pain on account of foolish reasonings.

"Sunday, 28th.—Preached twice in Middletown, Connecticut, and administered the sacrament. The first was a lifeless sermon, and, as far as I can judge, as unprofitable to others as it was uncomfortable to myself. The last was comfortable to me, and, I suppose, profitable to some.

"Saturday, June 3d.—In accordance with a plan devised for me, I have taken a circuitous route through Old and East Hartford, Ellington, Wilbraham, Brookfield, and Worcester, to Waltham; but no appointments having been made for me, I have had a week of affliction and disappointment, except in Ellington. There Dr. Steel procured me a good congregation, and I hope good was done. Here the Presbyterian congregations *tax* the Methodists to build their meeting-houses—seize and sell their property to pay the Presbyterian minister. The traveling preacher on this circuit is not always exempt from these polite acts of Presbyterian charity.*

"Sunday, June 4, 1809.—Yesterday evening I reached this place, (Waltham, Massachusetts,) and Brother Bernis having sent out and collected a congregation, I preached to them at three o'clock.

"Monday, 5th.—I set out this morning with the pleasant expectation of meeting Bishop Asbury in Boston, fourteen miles distant; from which place, according to our general plan, I was to have the

* The Congregationalists were popularly called Presbyterians.

pleasure of his company to Monmouth, about one hundred and fifty miles. We met, but what was my disappointment when, before I was seated, the old gentleman, in a very pleasing mood, presented me with a new plan, which directed us to different routes. Accordingly, after a few hours, we parted. I followed directions, and moved on as I could, and in a day or two he came after me, on the same road, the greater part of the way.

“Saturday, June 10th.—Brother Heath’s, in Scarborough. I have passed through nearly all the seaport towns in my course, and preached in Boston, Lynn, and Portsmouth, this week. There is a beautiful prospect of religion in Portsmouth, the seat of government for New Hampshire. I heard more doctrinal sentiments and more breathing after holiness expressed in a love-feast here than in any other place I have visited lately. This society has been raised, and a meeting-house purchased, by George Pickering, in the course of this year.

“Of late I have been considerably afflicted. In general I enjoy peace of mind, but I do not enjoy that depth of religion which I believe it is the Christian’s privilege to possess.

“Sunday, 11th.—I preached in Scarborough in the morning; rode eight miles and preached in Portsmouth in the evening. The Lord is present. Here the horse of Brother Sandford failed, and he determined to return; consequently, I have to travel alone. Rode in company with Brother Joel Winch from Portland to Monmouth. He is an agreeable young man.

"The New England Conference commenced on Thursday, 15th, and closed on the evening of the fourth day. This is an amiable body of preachers, having many difficulties to encounter and much love to support them.

"*Thursday, 29th.*—From Monmouth to Barnard. Have been blessed with the company and attention of Brother Branch, the Presiding Elder. He is a steady, pious, friendly man—his words few and profitable. Had a few meetings on our trip—a most comforting one this evening.

"*Saturday, July 8.*—At Kingsbury. From Barnard I have rode from twenty-five to forty miles a day, and preached at Rutland, Willstown, Ash Grove, Lansingburg, Albany, Schenectady, and Kingsbury. But the fatigue has so overcome me that I have to stop a day and take physic. We have labored and suffered much through this country, but there is now a prospect of reaping the fruit of those who went before us.

"*Sunday, June 16, 1809.*—Capt. David Dorsey's, Lyons, between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. In consequence of confused plans, I had no regular appointments this week. It has been a time of affliction and trial. After losing more than an hour in crossing Lake Cayuga, and riding twenty-five miles, I reached this place at twelve o'clock, just after the people left the meeting-house; but a very considerable congregation was collected at five o'clock, to whom I preached with satisfaction to myself, and I hope some were benefited.

"*Sunday, 23d.*—On the evening of last Sabbath it

began to rain, and continued without intermission for forty hours. The streams rose so high, I could not go on. But few ventured to cross the outlet to-day; but I preached to a respectable congregation in Brother Dorsey's dwelling-house. Although I am altogether at a loss to know how I am to get through this difficult country now, and my plan of appointments has fallen through, I have enjoyed peace of mind. Happily situated, in an agreeable family, I have recovered my strength considerably, and feel resigned to the providence which awaits me.

"Saturday, 29th.—Amaziah Sutton's, on Lycoming Creek. On Monday I preached at Geneva. Here Brother Draper was kind enough to meet and conduct me through the difficulties. On Tuesday morning we started, and crossed the Canandaigua Lake and village, through Bath; crossed the Conhocton at the painted post—Canestio, Tioga, to the Block-house; crossed the mountain and descended the Lycoming to this place. I have enjoyed serene peace this week. To God be all the glory!

"Sunday, 30th.—Preached in the meeting-house at eleven o'clock, and in the court-house at Port William at four o'clock in the afternoon.

"Saturday, August 5th.—Thomas Waston's. On Monday morning I set out in pursuit of my appointments, intending to spend the next Sabbath in Bedford. We ascended the west branch of the Susquehanna, took up Eagle Creek to the iron-works, and reached this neighborhood on Thursday evening; and learning it is forty or fifty miles out

of my way to go by Bedford to Pittsburgh, I determined to spend the Sabbath and preach here. Through the week have had unusual religious enjoyments—have been very kindly entertained by strangers who seemed glad to see me.

“Sunday, August 6th.—Preached at George Hyskell’s Meeting-house, to a large and attentive congregation—hope the labor was not in vain. Rode six miles, through the rain, to Benjamin Johnson’s.

“Monday, 7th.—Ascended the Alleghany, through Burgoon’s Gap, and lodged on the mountain, but the entertainment was intolerably bad.

“Tuesday, 8th.—Rode through rain for several hours—road extremely bad, on account of deep mud, rocks, and water; lodged at James Wakefield’s, but was afflicted by a few men who had drunk a quart of whisky each in the harvest-field this day.

“On Friday, the 11th of August, I reached the camp-ground on Pike Run, in Washington county. Here I got into my appointments, after losing a whole week on this side of the mountain, on account of the flood. At this encampment there were between thirty and forty wagons, and eighty or ninety camps and tents.

“On Sunday, 13th, there were two or three thousand people on the ground; but such a proportion of worthless creatures, if I may judge by their behavior, I never saw at a place of worship before. On Friday and Saturday we had comfortable seasons—some converts; but from twelve o’clock on Sabbath the work put on an awful appearance, and

continued without intermission the greater part of the night.

“Monday, the 14th, was a very rainy day, but a great many serious people attended. The work was very considerable through the afternoon and night.

“On Tuesday morning the sacrament of the Lord’s supper was administered to about three hundred and fifty communicants; after which it was proposed to ascertain the number of converts at this meeting, but such was the excitement of the people, it was not attempted.”

Bishop Asbury also was present at this meeting, having arrived there on Saturday evening. He preached once—2 Cor. vi. 20; Bishop McKendree, four times—Ex. xix. 10, 11; Isa. xii. 6; Deut. xxx. 19; and 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

From this place the Bishops proceeded westward, taking different routes for the Western Conference—Bishop Asbury going through Pittsburgh, and Bishop McKendree passing through Washington, Pennsylvania, Steubenville, Zanesville, Chillicothe, Ohio, and reaching Cincinnati on the 27th of September. Before reaching there, however, he attended one quarterly-meeting, near Middletown, and three more camp-meetings—the first near Chillicothe, the second at P. Gatch’s, and the last at John Collins’s. At these meetings he preached nearly every day, and even when traveling, usually preached either in the day or at night where he might lodge. Such were the zeal, the industry, and labor of our fathers;

and thus was Methodism planted in this country. That such efforts were successful is not surprising. God was with them. If we would retain what they gained, we must love and labor like them. It is not enough to say we have John, or Francis, or William for our father: without their faith and works we are not of them nor like them. What would a modern *star* preacher think of traveling, and laboring, and suffering, like Asbury and McKendree—on horseback round the continent annually? Yet *they* did this for many successive years.

Bishop McKendree introduced a new style of things, in presiding over the Annual Conferences; for while Bishop Asbury always presided with dignity and impartiality, yet he was regarded by the preachers as a *father*, and did not on all occasions adhere strictly to the "Rules of Order," in the management of Conference business. His age, his long services, and his intimate acquaintance with the whole work, and with the workmen, gave him a position no one else could reasonably expect to occupy, and relieved him from the necessity of attending rigidly to parliamentary usage. But Bishop McKendree felt that his relation was in some respects a different one. Many of those over whom he was called to preside were older and more experienced than himself, and would be far less likely to submit to him, as they had done to Bishop Asbury, than to be controlled by rules made by the Conference for the transaction of its own business. Besides, he was a man of *method*, as was evinced in

every thing he did and said, and had long since come to the conclusion that a close adherence to established rules, by deliberative bodies, is not only a protection to the minority and the president, but is calculated to expedite business. He therefore made himself familiar with the rules which obtain among such bodies, and insisted upon each Conference adopting and adhering to them. And as he was prompt, impartial, and courteous in deciding all such questions of law and order as properly devolved upon him, he soon became, in the estimation of the whole Connection, a *model* president. This first round, made in company with his venerated senior colleague, exhibited the contrast in their manner of conducting business, and evinced his fitness for the office of president. And it is believed that during the whole of his Episcopal career he was rarely, if ever, known to make an official decision from which a majority dissented. The secret of his success in this respect was that he thoroughly understood the Discipline and usage of the Church, and was perfectly familiar with the rules of debate. Thus was he enabled to detect the least divergence from law and order; and his self-command, combined with a prompt yet mild and conciliatory mode of address, inspired confidence and gave much weight to his decisions. We have often heard the opinion expressed by those competent to judge, that Bishop McKendree was unsurpassed in Church or State as a presiding officer; and the writer, who has the misfortune never to have seen Bishop Asbury in the chair, is decidedly

of the opinion that he has never seen any one who so impressed and controlled a body of men as Bishop McKendree did in his palmy days. There were always quietness, order, and a respectful manner among all the members of Conference, where he presided.

The name of Dr. Coke is too intimately connected with American Methodism to allow it to disappear suddenly from any work which professes to give a general account of Methodism during the latter part of the eighteenth and the former part of the nineteenth century. And as we have on several occasions adverted to his official relation to American Methodism, and shall present the reader with several letters from him to Bishop McKendree, we hope it may be pardoned if we now bring up the history of this noble-hearted minister from the General Conference of 1804 to the present date.

It appears that Dr. Coke never visited America after 1804. Indeed, after the death of Mr. Wesley, in 1791, his services in England were regarded as almost indispensable, especially in connection with the Foreign Mission work. Hence, in the address of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to our General Conference in 1804, they earnestly solicited the return of the Doctor; and the General Conference consented to the request, with the proviso, "That he shall hold himself, subject to the call of three of our Annual Conferences, to return when requested; but, at farthest, that he shall return, if he lives, to the next General Conference." The improved state of Bishop Asbury's health,

together with the assistance he now received in the General Superintendency of the work, by the election of Mr. Whatcoat, rendered it less important to detain the Doctor. Immediately upon his return to England, from his ninth and last visit to America, he entered most zealously and efficiently upon his work as Superintendent of Missions. His operations embraced both home and foreign missions; and, by his indefatigable efforts in obtaining funds from friends to the cause, and from his own private fortune, he succeeded in supporting them, contrary to the fears of many of his brethren. If his schemes seemed occasionally too visionary, his astonishing success in raising money to sustain them, seemed to justify his views and silenced objections. Having married an estimable and wealthy lady, April 1, 1805—Miss Penelope Goulding Smith—he addressed a circular to his American brethren in June, 1805, announcing his marriage, and proposing to reside permanently with them “on the express condition that the seven Conferences should be divided betwixt us—(*i. e.*, Bishop Asbury and himself)—three and four, and four and three, each of us changing our division annually; and that this plan, at all events, should continue permanent and unalterable during both our lives.”

Allusions have frequently been made, from certain quarters, to an overture made by Dr. Coke to Bishop White in 1791, for a union of the Methodist Episcopal with the Protestant Episcopal Church; and he has been severely blamed on the one hand as having taken an unauthorized and rash step; and

on the other, his proposition has been regarded as a confession of the defectiveness of his ordination and of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In mitigation of the censure of some, and in refutation of the inferences of others, it ought to be remembered that the period when Dr. Coke conceived this purpose was one of peculiar gloom in the history of American Methodism. It was the year of Mr. Wesley's death; and, although the Church in America had been organized in 1784, yet the constitution of the Church had not been secured against infringement by the provision for a regularly returning delegated General Conference, acting under restrictions and limitations. It was also about the time of Mr. O'Kelly's secession. These things combined to alarm Dr. Coke; and, without having hinted the matter to Mr. Wesley, or consulted his colleague, or any other Methodist minister, he acted from the impulse of the hour. His object, doubtless, was to strengthen the Church by the union, and prevent a convulsion, which his fears had magnified into a terrible approaching calamity. But his proposition, unauthorized and indefinite as it was, and which, perhaps, he had not himself elaborated fully in his own mind, looked to a *union* of the Churches, and not to a dissolution of either of them. Nor is there any evidence that, in any event, he had become willing to disavow his ordination. He did not intend "a dereliction of ordination, sacraments, and the Methodist Discipline, but a *junction on proper terms*." Bishop White respectfully entertained the Doctor's plan for con-

sideration; but, of course, it failed. The Doctor himself, upon more mature reflection, perceived the impracticability, not to say folly, of this act, and requested the Bishop to burn his letter, which he regarded as private and confidential. But it seems that Bishop White and his friends did not regard the correspondence in this light, and after the whole affair had been kept secret from 1791 until 1804, it was made public. We do not accuse the Bishop of violating a moral or honorable obligation; and, as it seems he did not feel precluded, by a sense of propriety, from giving it to the world, it was hardly to be expected that others, less scrupulous and liberal than himself, would suffer so good an opportunity to pass without using it, to give their Methodist neighbor the thrust ecclesiastic. But was there any sin, or real degradation, in proposing an honorable union between two young Churches, not separated by any serious differences in doctrine or ritual? The writer has reason to believe that some excellent and talented clergymen, and many of the best members of the Bishop's Church, would not have been horrified at such a union even a few years ago—a thing which he regards as neither practicable nor desirable now, if it ever was.

The following original letter, written by Dr. Coke to Bishop Asbury upon this subject, has been found among the papers of Bishop McKendree, and is now, for the first time, given in full* to the press.

* Dr. Emory, it seems, had seen a copy of this letter, and makes a few quotations from it in his "Defense of Our Fathers."

The Doctor had but recently heard of the use which had been made of his correspondence upon this subject, and gives his version of his motives and acts in the premises:

Near Leeds, February 2, 1808.

VERY DEAR BROTHER AND FRIEND:—For some time you got the start of me in letters; but of late I have got the start of you. Perhaps I may not hear from you till after the General Conference.

I have heard there has been a paper-war concerning a letter I wrote in 1791 to Bishop White. But I did every thing with a pure intention. We had then no General Conference. You were then the only center of union; and you yourself saw the danger the infant Connection was in, which induced you, I doubt not, to lay the plan of an Annual Council at Cokesbury. I differed, it is true, in sentiment, from my dear venerable brother in that respect; but, as I before observed, you laid that plan from a full conviction it was absolutely necessary to do something for the security of the union of the body. I was fully convinced of the same necessity, and did then really believe (though I do not now) that a junction with the Episcopal Church, on proper terms, would, under the blessing of God, answer the end.

I never applied to the Convention for re-consecration. I never intended that either you or I should give up our Episcopal ordination. I did believe that a junction, as above, would very much enlarge our field of action, and that myriads would, in consequence of it, attend our ministry, who were

then much prejudiced against us. My proposals secured our Discipline in all points, and the independence of our places of worship. I had no thoughts of deciding on any thing (it would have been the greatest folly to have indulged such thoughts) without your full consent, and the consent of the General Conference, which was to be held the next year, to determine on the case of James O'Kelly's division. I only wanted to put things in a train. The proposal met with the approbation of the Bishops of the old Episcopal Church in America, but was thrown out by the lower house of Convention, as Mr. Ogden informed me. But all this was merely in the way of preparation; for it would have been absurd to have brought the business before the General Conference (which, for what I knew at that time, might never meet again) without knowing the minds of the old Church.* It was at that General Conference, which was held on the case of James O'Kelly, that it was resolved to have, in future, regular General Conferences. But I now see that the failure of my plan, which was laid down from the purest motives, was for the best. You yourself, my dear brother, never loved the American Church more than I have done, I verily believe, (excuse me for saying so,) though I grant you have had more opportunities of serving

* Bishop Coke, as an Englishman, naturally identifies the Protestant Episcopal Church with the Colonial Church of England, "the old Church;" though, in reality, the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was organized before the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

it. However, I do conjure you, my brother, by the glory of God, and by every motive which can proceed from declarations of affection, on your part as well as mine, by every Christian grace, by our union in the Church, and particularly the honor of Him who is the great mystical, real, and spiritual Head of us both, that you do not suffer my character to be injured at the next General Conference.

I shall say no more, but leave the whole to God.

Our work in the United Kingdom goes on well—very well. We have not those astonishing, refreshing times which you have in your camp-meetings; but there is a secret, gradual, and deep work on all hands, which, when it comes to be opened and examined at the Conference, gives an increase of ten thousand—nine thousand, etc. And this is the more extraordinary, as there is nothing heard of but war. One hundred and thirty thousand sailors just voted for by the Parliament for the ships-of-war, and an immense military force. And among all these descriptions of men, there are but few who are born again. And yet the work increases! Let God have all the glory!

My precious wife and I are continually on the wing. We have no home but God, and he is indeed our home, our constant home, our comfortable home, our dwelling-place, our tabernacle, our heaven here below, our all in all. Glory, for ever glory be to his name! She unites with me in love to you and our brethren, the preachers. God bless you! Pray for us.

I am, my dear, esteemed friend, yours affectionately and faithfully,

T. COKE.

After the able and satisfactory vindication of Dr. Coke, and of American Methodism, by Dr. Bangs, and especially by the late Bishop Emory, in his "Defense of Our Fathers," no explanation or defense can be necessary upon this point. Those wishing to see a full exposition of this whole affair, may find it in Bishop Emory's work, referred to above.

Dr. Bangs, in referring to the proviso in Dr. Coke's letter, calls it a proposition "to become a resident in America, on the condition that the Continent should be divided into two parts; one of which to be under his superintendency, and the other under the superintendency of Bishop Asbury." (History M. E. Church, Vol. II., p. 179.) And Larabee repeats the same view in his "Asbury and his Coadjutors," Vol. I., p. 326. The writer confesses that, guided by these authorities, he had always done Dr. Coke the injustice of believing that he had proposed a *permanent territorial* division of the work; whereas, he only proposed a plan for *permanent alternation* with Bishop Asbury, in superintending the Conferences. An original printed circular, with the autograph of Dr. Coke, dated June 1, 1805, now lying before him, first relieved his mind of the impression that the Doctor had proposed so injudicious and unconstitutional a condition as the words of Dr. Bangs seem to express. The fact is, Dr. Coke did not think he ought to abandon his

useful position in England unless he could occupy such a relation to the work in America as would give him an opportunity of at least equal usefulness. He therefore proposed to be considered as Mr. Asbury's equal in administration, as he was in office; for heretofore he had not, in a single instance, presided over a Conference, nor stationed the preachers, except in the presence and under the supervision of Bishop Asbury. Should he make America his home, he required to be regarded as on a parity with his colleague. The errors of Dr. Coke, in making this proposition, were: First, he ignored—undesignedly, doubtless—the position and claims of Bishop Whatcoat, who was still living, and was greatly and justly loved, and who was then actively engaged in the duties of his office. The Doctor, doubtless, regarded him as superannuated. Second, he called upon the *preachers* to divide the work; whereas, the Bishops, by an arrangement of their own, can annually distribute the work of visiting and supervising the Conferences. No doubt Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat would have gladly recognized him as their equal in every respect, and would possibly have agreed to such an alternating plan of superintendence as has been practiced in America for many years. But their concurrence was not asked by the Doctor, and neither the Annual nor General Conferences, much less the preachers, in their individual capacity, possessed the authority to control the question. Such an interference might have had a baneful influence as a precedent, leading to the destruction of “our plan of

itinerant General Superintendency." Third, this plan was to last as long as he and Bishop Asbury should live, which would have been violated by the election of another Bishop during that time, however necessary it might be to have another. Of course Dr. Coke did not come back to the United States, as the Annual Conferences did not urge him to do so, in view of the condition upon which he proposed to come, notwithstanding the death of Bishop Whatcoat, in 1806, leaving Bishop Asbury alone, rendered his services very desirable. The Doctor remained in England, and was both useful and popular; and American Methodism was, perhaps, not greatly retarded by his declining to come.

A reply to Dr. Coke's circular was adopted by the Baltimore Conference, March 17, 1806. The copy, which was carried by the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, is before me, signed by the committee who prepared and reported it, viz., George Roberts, David Hill, Enoch George, Nelson Reed, and Alexander McCaine; and by Joseph Toy, Secretary. We do not admire its temper, and think it unnecessarily and unjustly severe. To some of its doctrines we are decidedly opposed, while we approve its main object and its general bearing. It is a rare document.

There is also before us the reply of the Philadelphia Conference to the Doctor's circular, which, while it plainly and firmly declines the terms upon which he proposed to return to America, yet does so in the most mild and respectful language.

It is a model document—dated Philadelphia, April 19, 1806, and signed W. P. Chandler, Secretary.

About 1806 Dr. Coke finished his great work—"Commentary on the Bible"—which he had undertaken in compliance with the request of the Wesleyan Conference of 1792.

Dr. Coke may be justly styled the father and founder of the Domestic and Foreign Missions of our British brethren; at least, so far as they were not the direct result of the itinerant system under Mr. Wesley. He is entitled to the credit of having founded and sustained the mission in the British Colony at Sierra Leone, Africa. Having failed in his first attempt to establish a mission among the heathen Africans, his attention was afterward called to the fact, that some negroes, who had been carried, at the close of our Revolution, by the British troops and Tories, from the United States to Nova Scotia, had finally been colonized at Sierra Leone, and that some of them, having been Methodists in America, had introduced religious worship among the colonists, had formed a society, and built a chapel, he immediately resolved to supply them with a preacher. Hence the origin of British missions among the Africans. He advanced three thousand dollars to furnish the outfit of this mission; and for the outfit of the East India Mission, he offered thirty thousand dollars, if so much should be found necessary.

For many years, by his personal influence, he sustained missions in the West Indies, Nova Scotia, the

Norman Isles, Ireland, Wales, Gibraltar, and the destitute portions of England; and it was only a short time before his death that any permanent and reliable organization, for raising missionary money, was devised by the Wesleyan Methodists.*

Dr. Coke does not seem to be chagrined by the course pursued toward him in America, in declining his proposition; for at the General Conference he substantially renews his former proposal, if his services should be deemed imperatively necessary. His kind, congratulatory letter to Bishop McKendree upon his election, already quoted, is another evidence of his sincerity and magnanimity.

It is foreign to our purpose to follow, in detail, the history of this great and good man; suffice it to say that, after having devoted a life of singular purity and energy to the cause of God, to which he had given an amount of money out of his own purse, which might be regarded, even in England, as a large fortune, he projected the East India Mission. On Dec. 30, 1813, he, in company with a noble band of missionaries, embarked for India, and on May 4, 1814, he died on board the ship. His body rests under the Equator, in the midst of the Indian Ocean, but we doubt not his ardent and holy soul has found a home in the "Father's house." He died of apoplexy, suddenly and alone in the night, in his sixty-seventh year.

Dr. Coke was very low of stature, but finely pro-

* Larabee, Vol. I.

portioned. His voice was feminine, and remarkable for melody and distinctness. He was a ripe scholar, a ready debater, quick in his apprehensions, impulsive in his emotions, and a delightful preacher. He was fitted, both by nature and habit, to an active life. One great passion reigned over his life—it was a noble one: it was, to do good by spreading true religion over the earth. Methodism owes him much. In England, Mr. Wesley found him a very useful helper; and after that great reformer passed away, the Doctor was of infinite service in uniting the Society, and guiding its missionary operations. American Methodists should never forget the man who came to help Asbury and Methodism, as did La Fayette to sustain Washington and Congress in the Revolution. Nor was his love for us a sudden or a transient feeling. He crossed the Atlantic nine times; and, although he did not remain long at a time, yet his talents and influence were ever ready to be employed for our welfare.

His peculiarities were the result of his temperament, and of his English education. His virtues were many and great. In connection with the constellation of the world's benefactors, his name will glitter in the historic firmament, like a bright and beautiful star, for ever. His body rests amid the pearls which pave the Indian Ocean; its deep, blue waves sing his requiem, but his monument is the missionary enterprise of English and American Methodism; and at the resurrection of the just, myriads from Africa, Europe, America, and the islands of the sea, will hail him blessed.

“ Servant of God, well done !
Rest from thy loved employ ;
The battle fought, the vict’ry won,
Enter thy Master’s joy ! ”

The voice at midnight came ;
He started up to hear ;
A mortal arrow pierced his frame :
He fell, but felt no fear.

Soldier of Christ, well done !
Praise be thy new employ ;
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour’s joy.

CHAPTER X.

Bishops McKendree and Asbury go from Cincinnati to South Carolina Conference—Thence to Virginia Conference—To Baltimore—Easton, Pennsylvania—New York—New England—Genesee Conference—Camp-meeting Conferences—Through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee—Bishops Asbury and McKendree go on horseback to South Carolina—Winter tour—Letter from Bishop Morris—Method—Mrs. Mabry's letter—Attends various Conferences—Letter to Bishop Asbury about stationing the preachers—General Conference of 1812—Presiding-elder question—No Bishop elected—Earthquake—War—Letters.

BISHOPS MCKENDREE and Asbury, accompanied by William Burke and others, left Cincinnati, the seat of the late Western Conference, on Oct. 9, 1809.* As usual, in those days, their appointments were in advance of them, and it became necessary for them to start at midnight in order to get to Mount Gerizim in time to meet their engagement.

Passing on through Kentucky and preaching alternately, they visited Lexington and Springfield, through Green and Barren counties; Bishop Asbury, however, taking the direct route from Lexington to South Carolina, through East Tennessee, and Buncombe county, North Carolina, while Bishop

* At this Conference "about 80 preachers were stationed, 14 rejected, 9 located, increase 2,366." — *Asbury's Journal*.

McKendree turned aside to visit his relations near Nashville, Tennessee. On this trip he called upon his old friends, James Gwin, Henry Tooly, Elmore Douglass, William Woodward, and others. From Nashville he started to Charleston, to attend the South Carolina Conference; and passing through the upper part of Alabama, then inhabited by the Cherokee Indians, we find him at Benjamin Watts's, in Jackson county, Georgia, on the 9th of November; on the 13th, at Hope Hull's; the 16th, at James Meriwether's; on the 19th he preached at Athens; on the 26th, at Greensboro; at Milledgeville on the 30th; at Dudley Hargrove's, his relative, on the 5th of December; thence by Colonel Foster's, Josiah Randle's, Weisinger's, to Augusta, reaching Charleston, South Carolina, the 19th. The Southern Conference began on Saturday, 23d December, in the city of Charleston, and held a week. Here he met Bishop Asbury, and the Conference seems to have been an interesting and profitable one. On the 30th, the Conference being over, the Bishops left Charleston and spent the night with Thomas McKendree, the Bishop's brother, who "fed them richly." The following Sabbath they both preached in Fayetteville, North Carolina; on Wednesday, at Wilmington; Sabbath, Jan. 14, 1810, at Newbern; 21st, at Norfolk, Virginia. Leaving Bishop Asbury, Bishop McKendree visited his father, and joined him again at Petersburg, where the Virginia Conference opened Feb. 8, 1810, and closed on the 14th.

From the seat of the Virginia Conference the

Bishops proceeded to Baltimore by different routes, Bishop McKendree passing through Williamsburg, Fredericksburg, Dumfries—spending a little time and preaching in Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington City.

The Baltimore Conference for 1810 was held in the city of Baltimore. It began on the 8th of March, and lasted eight days. Bishop Asbury was worn down with fatigue, and otherwise very unwell, and most of the labor of presiding, etc., devolved upon Bishop McKendree. He preached in Light Street Church at eleven o'clock, on 2 Cor. vii. 12, and on "The Point" at three o'clock, on 1 John xvi. 17. From the Baltimore Conference they went to Easton, and opened the Philadelphia Conference, on the 20th of April, and concluded it on the 27th. There was a camp-meeting in the neighborhood of the Conference, and the session was a pleasant one. The Diary of Bishop McKendree shows that one of them preached nearly every day while traveling, and sometimes both of them.

Bishop McKendree's route to the New York Conference was through Wilmington, Delaware, Philadelphia, and Trenton. He reached New York on the 10th of May, and was fully employed in visiting and preaching until the 21st, when the Conference began. It continued during the week.

The New England Conference for 1810 was held at Winchester, Massachusetts, beginning on the 6th of June, and closing on the 10th. From thence Bishop McKendree passed through and preached at Lynn, Marblehead, Boston, (Heb. x. 35,) Wilbra-

ham, (Prov. i. 23,) West Springfield, Westfield, and Schenectady, to Lyons Town, where the Genesee Conference began on the 20th of July. This seems also to have been a camp-meeting Conference—"great order and dispatch in business—stationed sixty-three preachers, and cured some, until then, incurable cases." In reference to the outcry raised by certain persons against the Bishops for appointing this Conference, charging them with an assumption of power, etc., Bishop Asbury adds, in his significant and laconic style, "*If the outcry of want of order came from God, the appointment of the Genesee Conference was one of the most judicious acts of our Episcopacy.*"

The Bishops parted company at the Genesee Conference, each wending his way toward the South-west, to attend the next session of the Western Conference, in Shelbyville, Kentucky, November 1st. Both of their Journals are before me. They both attended several camp-meetings on their respective routes, besides preaching almost daily and assisting at a goodly number of quarterly-meetings. They were never idle nor uselessly employed. Bishop McKendree passed through Springfield, Ohio, attended a camp-meeting on Rush Creek, on the 18th of August; was at Chillicothe on the 25th; crossed the Ohio River at Limestone on the 29th; preached in Lexington, Kentucky, on the 31st, (1 Sam. iii. 18;) recrossed the Ohio at Old Trace on the 12th of September; was taken sick next day, but was able to preach at Jeffersonville on Sabbath, the 15th, (Rev. iii. 20;) attended a camp-meeting

at Ferguson's from the 21st to the 24th of September; visited Jesse Head, B. McHenry, M. Lasley, Quessenbury, Pope, etc. From the 5th to the 8th of October, he attended the Nashville Camp-meeting, held at Liberty Hill, and the Fountain Head Camp-meeting from the 19th to the 22d of October, and enjoyed the society of his relations and his old friends Gwin, Blackman, and others.

The Western Conference was held this year in the field of his former usefulness. It began on the 1st of November, and continued eight days. It was a session "of great peace and good order." The second day, "Friday, was a day of humiliation and fasting. Twenty-six were admitted, ninety-five stationed—the increase is four thousand." The Conference over, the Bishops started for the far-distant Southern Conference. Even the venerable Asbury, old, feeble, and afflicted as he was, found it necessary to exchange his sulky for the saddle, in order to traverse the wilderness and get safely over the mountains and streams which had to be encountered in this long midwinter trip.

On Sabbath, the 18th of November, both of the Bishops were at Bishop McKendree's father's; but the next day they were off for South Carolina. Their route led by John McGee's, Dr. Tooley's, and J. Winton's, in East Tennessee, through Buncombe county, North Carolina, in deep snow, etc. Bishop McKendree and John McGee started at five o'clock and rode twenty-five miles in the piercing cold, over the Buncombe Mountains, to an appointment at Edney's, and Bishop McKendree preached—Jer iv.

14. Continuing their toilsome and most unpleasant journey, they arrived at Columbia, South Carolina, in time to open the Conference on Saturday, December 22d. "Order, peace, and love," characterized the session. About eighty preachers were stationed.

But it would be tiresome to the reader to follow the daily toils of this devoted man. Let the above suffice as a specimen.

With the Journal of Bishop Asbury and the Diary of McKendree before the writer, he is more than ever impressed with the sentiment that all great practical, useful men are remarkable for *method* and *painstaking*. The truly great man attends to little as well as great things. See this Diary—how neatly kept! as legible now, after the lapse of half a century, as if written an hour since; every day filled up with the name of the person with whom he stayed, the distance traveled, the meeting-house in which he preached, (his text given perfectly,) where the Conferences were held, how long, etc., etc. And when it is remembered that he was almost constantly in the saddle, frequently starting before day and traveling until dark, often in dirty and uncomfortable taverns, never having more than a day's rest in the month, and consequently without the quietude or facilities of keeping a regular journal, it is astonishing that he was able, from year to year, to commit so many facts to paper in so regular and consecutive a manner.

The love of order was a striking trait of Bishop McKendree's character; so that while he seemed

constantly intent upon great and important matters, he was never known to neglect the minute affairs of life. A remarkable instance of this, and one strikingly illustrative of his scrupulous regard for the rights of others, is given in the following letter of Bishop Morris, addressed to Bishop Soule in 1836:

BROTHER SOULE:—The following anecdote, though unimportant in itself, may possibly serve to illustrate one peculiar characteristic of Bishop McKendree—namely, his scrupulous attention to the rules of propriety in little things. You may use it or not, as may seem proper to yourself.

Many years ago—the precise time not recollected—one day in Conference, Bishop McKendree asked me for the loan of a pencil. I handed him the only article of the kind I had. It was a very small cedar pencil, perhaps two inches and a half long, and less in diameter than a common rye-straw, with a plain brass head. It was used primarily as a pin, to fasten a small pocket memorandum-book, and to make notes on the same. The original value of the article could not have been more than three cents. Of so little importance was it to me, that I did not miss it at all, nor remember the transaction again until a year afterward, when the Bishop, one day in Conference, beckoned to me, and on my approaching him, handed me the pencil, which he had kept for me on a tour of some thousands of miles, having perhaps forgotten to return it at the proper time. As the business of Confer-

ence was in progress, he gave no explanation, but the sight of the pencil and a moment's reflection brought the whole transaction to my mind, and afforded a theme of profitable meditation upon the character of a man who, amid the trials and perils of his extended journeys, and his numerous and daily cares respecting the Church over which he exercised his general superintendency, could still charge his mind with so small a matter.

He that would succeed in carrying out the principles of a great sysem, must attend punctually to all its little details, as did Bishop McKendree in regard to Methodism.

Yours respectfully,

THOMAS A. MORRIS.

Meadville, Penn., August 17, 1836.

The trait in Bishop McKendree's character, so happily illustrated in the above anecdote by Bishop Morris, was developed in many ways. It displayed itself in the systematic arrangement of all his business. He was a man of method. He could not preach, debate, or converse satisfactorily without regard to it. His plan of traveling and preaching on the way must always be prearranged. His traveling equipage, whether he went on horseback or in a carriage, was ever most carefully adjusted. His horse was never neglected, nor could he retire to rest after having been exhausted by a long and wearisome day's journey, until he knew he had received the best possible attention. As "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast," so this good

man regarded the comfort of his horse. This was strikingly displayed in the provision made by his will for the support of his faithful "old Gray."

His clothes were packed in his saddle-bags, or carriage-trunk, by his own hands—for who could do it so neatly? His papers were folded, labeled, and put up as he only could do it. In his dress and address, you perceived in a moment the neatness, simplicity, and courteousness of a gentleman who respected both himself and his company too highly to seem careless of his appearance. And while he was far from being stiff or unsocial in his manners, there was always about him a dignified and respectful demeanor, mingled with affability, which bespoke his character and his position. His presence always commanded respect, and his manners won the confidence of strangers; so that even those who loved to ridicule preachers felt constrained to treat *him* civilly; and children, reading his feelings in his face, would instinctively smile, climb upon his knees, and nestle in his bosom. There was an indescribable persuasiveness in his manner, whether in the pulpit or in the social circle. When animated, there was a kind of illumination of his features, reminding one of the gleaming of lightning behind a thin cloud. Before his tongue uttered the words, his eyes and mildly radiant face had already half told what was coming. His sense of propriety was such that he was rarely known to say or do any thing of questionable fitness. His delicacy and sensibility were remarkable. The same mental peculiarity which dictated order in every thing re-

lating to business matters, dress, etc., induced him to be careful of his words—so that “proper words in proper places,” best defines his sermons and conversations. Hence, too, the ease with which he could adapt his style and manner to the capacities and circumstances of his hearers.

The following communication, taken from the Sunday-school Visitor of 1852, sent to me by the late Rev. Anthony Dibrell, (of precious memory,) was furnished by Mrs. Mabry, of Petersburg, Virginia, and was addressed to children. She was the daughter of Mr. Grissett Davis, in whose house Mr. McKendree was ordained deacon in 1790, and where he often stayed. It illustrates several traits to which reference has been made.

MY DEAR LITTLE CHILDREN:—When I was young, nothing delighted me more than to hear my mother tell about old times: presuming you have the same kind of curiosity, and as I like children dearly, and like to please them, I will give you some account of my intercourse with Bishop McKendree, when I was a little girl and he a young man.

My father's house was, for many years, and as long as he lived, a home for Methodist preachers. At one time, Bishop McKendree was stationed in the town in which we lived. I do not remember how long he stayed at our house, but long enough for him and myself to become intimate friends. He was remarkably fond of children. He liked very much to have his hair combed, and I would stand, perhaps an hour at a time, on my little chair, comb-

ing his beautiful black hair, which curled naturally, and twining it around my tiny fingers. It was all cut short except behind, and there it was just long enough to curl. He would almost fall asleep while I was amusing myself behind him. When I came to arrange it in front, he would take me on his knee. And when I was done, a very sweet kiss would be my reward, and many thanks also. I would then take my little chair and sit close by him, and count the buttons at his knees: there were five at each knee; and he wore buckles on his shoes, too. I shall never forget his appearance, for, in my opinion, he was perfectly beautiful. His eyes were bright and black, and the expression of his countenance was mild and benignant. He had a holy, happy look. I remember one day I had finished combing his hair, and was playing about the room, when some one observed there was a cloud rising. A thunder-cloud was the most terrible thing in the world to me. I always nestled as closely as possible to my mother, because I thought she was so good the lightning would not hurt her. She mentioned to the Bishop how much I was alarmed, and how sorry she was to see a cloud on my account. I recollect that he called me to him, took me on his knees, laid my head on his breast, and soothed me with the kindest words. When the sharp lightning came, I would hide my little face in his bosom, and feel perfectly safe, because I thought nothing could harm me while near him, although I knew I was sinful—for I cannot remember the time I did not know it, or had not the fear

of the Lord before my eyes. After the violence of the storm was over, he related an anecdote. There was a lady, he said, who feared lightning very much. She had heard that it never struck little children; and whenever she saw a cloud arising, she would gather as many around her as she could. One day she had one or two on her lap, and several others about her, and felt safe. A cat and kitten were lying in the door, very near together, when there came a severe flash of lightning, which killed the cat and left the kitten unhurt. It had such an effect upon her that she began from that time to seek religion, and never rested until she found it. I could tell you a great deal about the impression his words made upon my heart at that time and in after years, when I grew up to maturity, but I am not writing my own history. Perhaps, if you like what I have now written, and my health will permit, I may tell you about some of the other Bishops and preachers. I knew Bishop Asbury, Bishop Whatcoat, Dr. Coke, but *never loved any* as well as I did Bishop McKendree. AN OLD LADY.

It might be unprofitable to follow the narrative of the Bishop's daily travels and labors through the year 1811, having given so full an account of his first two official tours around the Continent; let it suffice, then, to state that his Diary shows that from the seat of the Southern Conference, in Columbia, South Carolina, he started on the 29th Dec., 1810, for the Virginia Conference, which met at Raleigh, North Carolina, on the 7th of Feb., 1811; thence to

the Baltimore Conference, held in the city, from the 20th to the 28th of March; thence to Philadelphia, where the Conference was opened on the 20th of April, to New York Conference, in the city of New York, May 20th to 25th; the New England Conference, at Barnard's Town, Vermont, June 20th to 27th; the Genesee Conference, in Paris, New York, 20th to 25th July—thus closing his third round of Conference visitations. In looking over the notes entered in his Journal on these tours, it strikes the reader that he was a most laborious and punctual preacher. He seems, for months, to have preached and traveled almost every day when not actually holding Conference. Midwinter and summer were, in this respect, alike to him. Thus, in December he had *two* rest-days; in November, *none*; in January, two; February, none; March, two; April, none; May, none; June, none; July, none; August, two; in September, none; although he attended three camp-meetings in Ohio during the month, and preached nearly every day.

Bishop Asbury, as usual, attended all the Conferences, and found time to visit Canada and see the state of the work there in the interval of the last two Conferences. The journey, however, was performed in great bodily pain, and he arrived at the Genesee Conference with exhausted strength and a complication of diseases. He had traveled sixteen hundred miles in sixty days. "Sore, lame, and weary," he got to Paris. He adds: "My spirit rejoiced with dear Bishop McKendree; he nursed me as if I had been his own babe." Slowly wending

their way westward, inquiring into the condition of the Societies lying on their routes, and preaching almost daily, they began their unceasing round of labor again at the Western Conference, in Cincinnati, Nov. 1, 1811.

It appears from the following letter that Bishop Asbury, at the close of the Genesee Conference, which finished the third round of the Annual Conferences since 1808, urged Bishop McKendree to adopt his plan of stationing the preachers without consulting the Presiding Elders, to which he objected, but proposed a modification of it as follows:

Cincinnati, Oct. 8, 1811.

BROTHER ASBURY:—I am fully convinced of the utility and necessity of the council of the Presiding Elders in stationing the preachers, but you fear individuals will make it difficult, if not impracticable, for you to proceed on this plan. I am willing to assist you in the best way I can; and, as I am in duty bound, so I hold myself in readiness to render the most effectual service to the Church. Consequently, I am still willing to accede to the proposition which you made at the Genesee Conference, if it may be qualified. If it is still your wish, I will take the plan of stations, after you have matured it—call the Elders to my assistance, and, after deliberate council, report in favor, or dictate such alterations as may be thought necessary. But I still refuse to take the *whole* responsibility upon myself, not that I am afraid of proper accountability, but

because I conceive the proposition included one highly improper.

Yours, in the bonds of a yoke-fellow,

W. McKENDREE.

After the Western Conference, he went to Camden, South Carolina; thence to Richmond, Virginia; thence to Leesburg, Virginia; and thence to Philadelphia, 18th to 25th of April, 1812, holding a Conference at each of these places.

Let the reader think of one of these trips, say from Cincinnati, Ohio, by the way of Lexington, Kentucky, Nashville, Tennessee, through the Indian Nation and Georgia, to Camden, South Carolina. Let him think of the distance traveled on this single tour; the cold of midwinter; the mud; the swollen streams, frequently without bridges or ferry-boats; the fatigue of horseback-riding to men from fifty-five to sixty-eight years old; the discomforts of road-side taverns; and, in addition to all this, "the daily care of all the Churches," and he will have some conception of their sacrifices and sufferings. Surely, they must have been more or less than men to endure all this, unless it were for Christ's sake.

At the close of the Philadelphia Conference, Bishop McKendree was taken sick, and was not able to reach New York until several days had elapsed in the session of the General Conference.

The General Conference which began in the city of New York, May 1, 1812, was the *first delegated* convention of the Church. Eight Conferences were represented by ninety delegates. It was a most im-

portant assembly, inasmuch as it not only determined questions of great interest to the welfare of the Church, but especially as it tested the fealty of her representatives in the highest judicatory of the Church to the constitution itself. Methodism was about to pass the ordeal which the civil government had experienced in the first Congress under the Federal Constitution. And, as in the latter case, the practical application of the constitution was rendered both more difficult and important on account of the novelty of the experiment, and the danger of introducing precedents, which might lead to disastrous consequences; so, in the former, the utmost caution was necessary to begin the administration of the newly-adopted organic laws of the Church conformably to the true intent and spirit of the Ecclesiastical Constitution. In both, the highest qualities of mind and heart were needed. There was this obvious difference, however, in the charter under which they respectively acted. The two governments not only differ in their origin, nature, design, and mode of operations, but moreover, while the power vested in Congress is limited by specific grants of power, to be exercised for the general welfare, and the means necessary to execute these specific objects, the delegated General Conference possessed, by constitutional right, all power originally belonging to the whole body they represented, except certain clearly-defined prohibitions. These prohibitions protected the rights and privileges of the membership and ministry, the General Rules of the So-

cieties, the Articles of Religion, and the Episcopal form of our General Superintendency of the Church. Beyond these three great and vital questions, every thing in the polity of the Church was, and is yet, under their control.

The eyes of all who loved the Church were turned, with the most intense solicitude, to the action of the General Conference of 1812. The Bishops were to preside alternately as joint presidents of the body; and, fortunately, *they* combined the highest confidence of the Church, both as to their purity of motives and their knowledge of its true interests. Bishop Asbury's integrity of character and sagacity inspired great confidence, while all the past history of Bishop McKendree marked him as equal to the emergency. But Bishop Asbury had heretofore exercised rather the prerogatives of a father than the office of a president, and had never been remarkable for conducting business according to the strict Rules of Order. Who was to inaugurate the new state of things demanded by the Church? Happily for the Church, Bishop McKendree was the man for the occasion.

The Rev. Henry Smith, of the Baltimore Conference—probably the oldest traveling preacher of the Methodist Church—in a letter to the writer, dated February 6, 1855, says upon this point:

“Previous to the first delegated General Conference, May 1, 1812, Bishop McKendree drew up a plan of business to be brought before the General Conference. His address was read in Conference; but as it was a new thing, the aged Bishop (Asbury)

rose to his feet immediately after the paper was read, and addressed the junior Bishop to the following effect: 'I have something to say to you before the Conference.' The junior also rose to his feet, and they stood face to face. Bishop Asbury went on to say, 'This is a new thing. I never did business in this way, and why is this new thing introduced?' The junior Bishop promptly replied, 'You are our *father*, we are your sons; you never have had need of it. I am only a *brother*, and have need of it.' Bishop Asbury said no more, but sat down with a smile on his face. The scene is now before me. I believe the Bishops have pursued the plan ever since."

The address of Bishop McKendree was not merely a programme of the business which legitimately devolved upon the body, but was designed to call the attention of the Conference to the administration of the Bishops, and to the condition and wants of the Church.

Mr. Asbury had been trained in the Wesleyan school, and his presidency had been similar, in some respects, to the British system of holding Conferences. The sessions held under him had not been conducted very strictly by parliamentary rules. Mr. McKendree knew that a careful adherence to order is not only a protection to the minority and the president, but is essential to the dispatch of business. The "new thing" which surprised the elder Bishop was right in itself, and most proper as emanating from one who thus modestly disclaimed the prerogatives of a *father*, and

voluntarily placed himself under the laws of order in exercising his office. The General Conference approved his course; committees were appointed to draw up Rules of Order and to consider the various topics of Bishop McKendree's address; and from that time until the present, the sessions of the Methodist Conferences, both Annual and General, have surpassed all other ecclesiastical bodies for their strict adherence to the established rules of debate, and for the amount of business transacted in a given time. Indeed, it may well be doubted whether there is any deliberative body which equals a Methodist Conference in these respects. The introduction of this mode of procedure may be attributed chiefly to Bishop McKendree. Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat, were all Englishmen, and, although wise, great, and good, could not conform their mode of administration to the American idea. The first native American Bishop, himself a soldier and an officer in the war of independence, placed himself and his office in harmony with the feelings and sentiments of his countrymen, by refusing to govern except according to law. He was right, and the Church owes him a debt of gratitude for his course.

The following address was submitted by Bishop McKendree in writing:*

To the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church,
now assembled in the City of New York:

DEAR BRETHREN:—My relation to you and the

* Bangs's History of the M. E. Church, Vol. II., p. 308.
VOL. I.—12.

Connection in general seems, in my opinion, to make it necessary that I should address you in some way, by which you may get possession of some information perhaps not otherwise to be obtained by many of you.

It is now four years since, by your appointment, it became my duty jointly to superintend our extensive and very important charge. With anxious solicitude and good wishes, I have looked forward to this General Conference. The appointed time has come, and the Lord has graciously permitted us to meet according to appointment, for which I hope we are prepared jointly to praise and adore his goodness.

Upon examination, you will find that the work of the Lord is progressing in our hands. Our important charge has greatly increased since the last General Conference. We had an increase of upward of 40,000 members. At present we have upward of 2,000 local preachers, and about 700 traveling preachers, and about 190,000 members. And these are widely scattered over seventeen States, besides the several territorial settlements and the Canadas.

Thus situated, it must be expected, in the present state of things, that the counsel and direction of your united wisdom will be necessary to preserve the harmony and peace of the body, as well as the coöperation of the traveling and local ministry, in carrying on the blessed work of reformation which the Lord has been pleased to effect through our instrumentality. To deserve the confidence of the

local ministry and membership, as well as to retain confidence in ourselves and in each other, is undoubtedly our duty. And if we consider that those who are to confide in us are a collection from all classes and descriptions, and from all countries of which our nation is composed, scattered promiscuously over this vast continent—men who were originally of different educations, manners, habits, and opinions, we shall see the difficulty as well as the importance of this part of our charge.

In order to enjoy the comforts of peace and union, we must “love one another.” But this cannot abide where confidence does not exist; and purity of intention, manifested by proper actions, is the very foundation and support of confidence. Thus “united we stand”—each member is a support to the body, and the body supports each member; but if confidence fail, love will grow cold, peace will be broken, and “divided we fall.” It therefore becomes this body, which by its example is to direct the course of thousands of ministers and tens of thousands of members, to pay strict attention to the simplicity of gospel manners, and to do every thing as in the immediate presence of God. If we consider the nature of our business, our natural imperfections, and the history of the Church in all its attempts to reform the world, it is scarcely to be expected, in so large a body, that all will be as strictly evangelical as they should be. But it is to be hoped that such failures will be prevented as far as possible, both by your action and your example.

Standing in the relation I do to you and the Connection generally, I feel it a part of my duty to submit to your consideration the appointment of the Genesee Conference. And perhaps it may be for the general good if in your wisdom you should think proper to take into consideration a division of the work in the western country, and a proper arrangement of the work in general; and the magnitude and extent of the work which the Lord has graciously pleased to prosper in our hands, may make it proper for you to inquire if the work is sufficiently under the oversight of the Superintendency, and to make such arrangements and provision as your wisdom may approve. I would also suggest the necessity of keeping in view not only the traveling, but the relation and situation also of our local brethren, and to pursue that plan which may render the whole more useful. It may also be proper to bring into view any unfinished business of the last General Conference. Hitherto, as a body, we have been preserved by our well-digested system of Rules, which are as sinews to the body, and form the bond of union; but it is evident, both from experience and Scripture, that even good men may depart from first principles and from the best of rules: it may therefore be proper for you to pay some attention to the administration—to know the state both of the traveling and local ministry, as it relates to doctrine, discipline, and practice.

Before I conclude, permit me, my dear brethren, to express a few thoughts concerning the view I take of the relation in which I stand to this body.

It is only by virtue of a delegated power from the General Conference that I hold the reins of government. I consider myself bound, by virtue of the same authority, to exercise discipline in perfect conformity with the Rules of our Church, to the best of my ability. I consider myself justly accountable, not for the system of government, but for my administration, and ought therefore to be ready to answer in General Conference for my past conduct, and be willing to receive information and advice to perfect future operations. I wish this body to exercise their rights in these respects.

I take pleasure here in presenting my grateful acknowledgments for the high degree of confidence which my beloved brethren have placed in me, and especially for the able counsel and seasonable support afforded by many, which has, I believe, with the divine aid, preserved and supported me.

Dear brethren, such are the effects of our high responsibility, connected with a consciousness of my insufficiency, for so high a task, that I move with trembling. Your eyes, and the eyes of the Lord, are upon me for good. We shall rejoice together to see the armies of our Israel wisely conducted, carrying the triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom to the ends of the earth; and the Lord will rejoice to "make his ministers a flame of fire."

In you I have confidence, and on you I depend for such aid as the wisdom of men can give; and above all, I trust in divine aid. Influenced by these considerations, with my situation in full view, I cannot entertain a thought of bearing such awful

responsibility longer than I am persuaded my services are useful to the Church of God, and feel a confidence of being aided by your counsel and support, which is for you to give in any way or form you may see proper. And while I join with you, my dear brethren, in pure gospel simplicity, to commit and recommend ourselves and our several charges to the special care of the great Head of the Church, I remain, with sentiments of love and confidence, your servant in the gospel of Christ,

WM. MCKENDREE.

New York, May 5, 1812.

The following extract from *memoranda* of Bishop McKendree will show his wisdom in this matter:

General Conference, New York, 1812.

The president (Bishop McKendree) invited a committee of the most respectable and influential members of that Conference as his council. In doing this, he designedly left out some who were supposed to be his confidential friends, and selected men of talents of different sentiments as to the polity of the Church. He stated to them his necessity of counsel on such occasions; complained of a distant and reserved carriage toward him, which he thought was improper, and might be injurious; assured them he had no selfish ends, and then presented them with an instrument of writing which he had prepared as an address to the General Conference. And as it was a new thing among us, he asked them to consider it attentively, and give him their opinion without reserve upon the pro-

priety of presenting it; and if they thought an address advisable, to examine it critically, and suggest such alterations or additions as they might think proper. They examined it, and reported in favor of the address. The president was pleased with their freedom and delicacy in suggesting an amendment—he saw the propriety of doing so, and it was altered on account of its having a particular bearing.

W. McK.

Bishop Asbury had said at the opening of the Conference, "I hope very few rules will be made"—meaning thereby to discourage too much legislation. This was wisely said. The Church has much to fear from this quarter, and, unfortunately, has suffered greatly by over-legislating. Indeed, unnecessary interferences with individual rights have always been disastrous to the peace of both Church and State. If the ends of government are secured, the less government is felt the better. There are always, however, restless spirits in every large assembly, who are ready to lead the more timid into innovations upon established usages. And the Conferences of the Methodist Church have not proved an exception to this remark. Attempts had been made at every General Conference since 1792, to change the mode of appointing the Presiding Elders. They had always been appointed by the Bishops, upon the principle that as the Bishops have the general superintendence of the work, and are held accountable, directly or indirectly, for the interpretation and administration of the Discipline

of the Church, they should have the power to select those to whom, in their absence, this work is committed—thus associating them with the Bishops in the oversight of the Church. Those who sought to change this system wished to make the office of Presiding Elder elective by the Annual Conferences, and that those thus elected should constitute the Bishops' "Council" in the respective Conferences. Mr. O'Kelly had proposed the principle involved in this measure, in the resolution offered by him in 1792—the rejection of which was the ostensible cause of his secession from the Church. It was proposed in 1800 to make them elective, and was lost. This question was brought distinctly before the General Conference of 1808, "while the constitution drafted by the committee was under consideration; and a motion having been made to lay the report of the committee upon the table, and by the question it was done; and the Presiding-elder question, as it was called, was taken up, argued at great length and with much ability, and lost by a large majority. After this, the consideration of the constitution reported by the committee was resumed, and it was adopted."

At the General Conference of 1812, the effort was renewed. Many strong and good men were its advocates. Among them were Jesse Lee, Asa Shinn, and Nicholas Snethen. Two days were consumed in its discussion, but the Conference refused to make the change. Bishops Asbury and McKendree were both decidedly opposed to the change.

The South and West have always been conservative upon this question.

Its defeat at this General Conference quieted the agitation for a short period, only to be renewed with increasing violence at each succeeding General Conference until 1828, when, it is to be hoped, it was finally laid to rest.

Another topic which excited much interest and no little controversy at this Conference, was the ordination of local deacons to elder's orders. Some leading members of the Conference had always been opposed to the ordination of local preachers, yet the majority had conferred upon them eligibility to deacon's orders. Now that it was proposed to graduate the deacons to elder's orders, the opposition was very strong. The strongest objection urged against the measure was, that in view of their relation to worldly business, the Bishops could not consistently require, nor the candidate conscientiously give, the vow to devote himself "wholly to this one thing, (the pastoral ministry,) and draw all his cares and studies this way." That the duties of an elder, as set forth in the ordination formulary, contemplated a real and active pastorate, and that to confer the office upon those who were known at the very time to be debarred, both by law and their relation to secular matters, from fulfilling its duties, was not only inconsistent in itself, but would tend to diminish the sense of responsibility in the traveling ministry who should be ordained under the same vows. On the other side, it was said that if they were called to the ministry, they ought to be

able to perform all its functions; and that as the Church had already conferred upon them the inferior office, and especially as they might be more *useful*, and their *services were much needed*, they should be admitted to the office. This view prevailed, and thenceforth the local deacons were eligible to elder's orders after four years' probation, and upon their recommendation by the Quarterly-meeting Conference certifying their qualifications and that their *services are needed* in the circuits where they reside. It was also then "provided that no slave-holder shall be eligible to the office of local elder in any State or Territory where the civil law will admit emancipation, or suffer the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom."

As Bishop McKendree had, in his address, called the attention of the General Conference to the Superintendency, the Committee which was appointed on Episcopacy having taken into consideration the propriety of increasing the number of bishops, reported that it was not necessary; and the report was adopted. Thus were these three important questions settled; and after a harmonious session of twenty-two days, the Conference adjourned to meet in Baltimore, May 1, 1816.

"The Episcopal Committee" requested the Bishops in the General Conference of 1812 to give their opinions as to the propriety and necessity of electing another bishop; and also as Bishop Asbury had been invited by the British Conference to visit England, the Episcopal Committee wished to know if he contemplated doing so. His reply to these ques-

tions, in his own hand-writing, was given to the Committee, and by them to Bishop McKendree, as appears by the indorsement of S. G. Roszell. This was his answer :

New York, May 9, 1812.

MY DEAR BRETHREN:—Whatever I may have thought or spoken in former times upon strengthening the Episcopacy, I am not at liberty to say to you at this time, Do this, or that. I am bound in duty to serve the Connection with all my power of body and mind, as long and as largely as I can ; and, while I am persuaded that my services are needed and acceptable, to give up all thoughts of visits out of the American Continent, I feel myself indispensably bound to the Conference and my colleague, never to leave them nor forsake them upon the above conditions.

F. ASBURY.

The General Conference over, Bishop McKendree resumed his toilsome work with the prospect before him of increasing labor and diminished assistance ; for Bishop Asbury was rapidly wearing himself down by incessant travel and anxiety. When Bishop McKendree first entered in 1808 upon the duties of his office, Bishop Asbury proposed they should both attend all the Conferences, and preside alternately. But after awhile, having witnessed the ability of his colleague in the chair, he seldom undertook to conduct the public duties of his office in presiding over the deliberations of the Conferences, and confined himself generally to the task of stationing the preachers, assist-

ing in ordination, and occasional addresses to the preachers. Yet his presence and counsel were highly appreciated by his colleague, and the preachers generally. But his strength began to fail very rapidly, and he was often prostrated by fatigue and sickness. The year following the General Conference of 1812 found him at every Annual Conference, and for several years afterward he continued to drag himself along by the force of an almost indomitable will, trying to perform, as heretofore, the duties of an itinerant General Superintendent; and as nothing very unusual marked the history of this year's labor, it is not necessary to give the details of their travels.

During the winter of 1811-12, the earthquakes occurred in the Western country. The whole Valley of the Mississippi was violently and frequently agitated, and the region of New Madrid, on the Mississippi River, seems to have been the center of subterranean convulsion. Fissures opened in the earth, lakes of considerable size and depth were formed by the sinking of the ground, all accompanied by a rumbling sound and violent concussions. The effect upon the river itself was such that at New Madrid boats were wrenched from their moorings, and submerged by the agitation of the waves. Many lives were lost. This state of things continued to occur at irregular intervals for several months, until the whole country became alarmed. In many instances this excitement assumed a religious aspect, and a wide-spread and glorious revival extended through the greater part

of the Western work, insomuch that the two Conferences (Ohio and Tennessee) into which the Western Conference was divided by the General Conference, reported, in the fall of 1812, a net annual increase of more than fifty per cent.; so that the Lord had not only "terribly shaken the earth, but had also mercifully shaken the hearts of the people."

The declaration of war against Great Britain by our government, June 18, 1812, and the excitement naturally growing out of it, had an unhappy effect upon the work generally, and especially at first in the Northern and Eastern sections of the country; and as this state of things continued until January, 1815, the whole country became deeply excited with military ardor, and consequently less susceptible of religious impressions. The following letter from Dr. Henry Wilkins, of Baltimore, an old and highly esteemed friend, to Bishop McKendree, may be interesting to the reader, not only because of the good sense and piety it exhibits, but also because of its allusions to the attack of the British upon Baltimore, and the patriotism of our preachers and people:

Baltimore, Aug. 11, 1813.

DEAR BROTHER:—Your letter gave us great consolation to find you are doing so well under so many disadvantages. Afflictions try both our faith and our feelings; though I do not see why they should try the former, for we ought not to expect to be delivered by faith from the physical elements of the world; for faith, though so powerful against moral

elements, has not acted against the physical, since the gospel was fully established in the days of our Saviour and his apostles. If unbelief would rid us of affliction, then our faith would be severely tried; but I believe, and in this you will join me, that religion is best both for soul and body. Since you were here, I have had a full share of bodily infirmities.

The British are now in sight: a score of ships-of-war fill up the bay from hence to Annapolis. Kent Island is in their possession; the little city is in danger. We are strong: one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon environ our city—part movable. We have about eight hundred cavalry, forty-five hundred infantry—two thousand expected from the country; a thousand Regulars at Annapolis, who will march if wanted. I hope with this force no blood will be shed—the British troops being about four thousand altogether.

All parties are wishing the British to be expelled. There is no political division in our Church, though great coldness, and few conversions. Our ministers are liked very well. You do better than the market people: they generally couple a fat and a lean one. You have given us three smart ones out of four. The fourth, though of pleasing, easy manners, does not show industry in reading: perhaps a defective *eye* may give him pain, but without much reading the city will soon swallow the few ideas a man has of his own.

I send you some books, and the love of all our family. I trust we are seeking after *true* riches, and

gain some. As to this world, while the war lasts I must purchase stock in the Bank of Contentment, which I believe is quite as good as gold. Now what shall I say but bid you go on in the glorious path you have set out in, and may your last days be your best days, and eternal glory be your reward!

Your friend,

HENRY WILKINS.

A characteristic letter from the venerable and devoted Freeborn Garrettson was received by the Bishop at the Genesee Conference. It is as follows:

Rhinebeck, June 29, 1813.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER:—I thought duty called me to go down to New York immediately after Conference, and direct in fixing matters. [Mr. Garrettson was then Presiding Elder of New York District.] I was sorry to find an unwillingness to receive Brother W. in Jamaica Circuit, and took the liberty to agree that he and Brother Lyon should change. I stayed a week in the city, and stepped down to Maryland; sent a messenger round, and preached in various places, and had the pleasure of seeing and visiting many of my friends. I also had the mortification of seeing the savage-like depredations in Havre de Grace—I may call it the native place of my ancestors. [This place was burnt by the British under Admiral Cockburn in 1813.] I thought it a good time to give them a faithful warning, but O how my heart did bleed to see so many of them living in fullness, and unconcerned about their eternal welfare.

I have traveled about seven hundred miles since our Conference, (May 20,) and preached to thousands with pleasure and freedom. I must begin to preach as if every sermon were my last. In fact, I view myself as a tottering monument of mercy on the brink of eternity. As my dear Father Asbury observed, I have gone in the better, though not the best way, the whole of my life. I have nothing to depend on for salvation but an interest in the meritorious righteousness of Christ. In *him* I have salvation. I spent one Sabbath in Philadelphia. They are fond of Emory in the Academy. I could have wept when I found the names of Cooper and Sargent like to drop from our Conference-records. It would have given us pleasure to have had you and Bishop Asbury at our house. Pray for me. If I cannot follow foot by foot, I will try to keep hard by, and hope to have some humble place in our Heavenly Father's kingdom. I profess to love both Church and State; and if I knew I had a little finger to raise against the order or union of either, I would cut it off. God bless you, my dear friend! I feel union with your spirit. Yours affectionately,

F. GARRETTSON.

We find the following letter in the Life of Bishop Emory, written by Bishop McKendree in reply to a note Mr. Emory had addressed him at the close of the Philadelphia Conference, 1812. Mr. Emory was then a young preacher, and the letter is alike honorable to the writer and receiver:

Wednesday Morning, April 29, 1812.

DEAR BROTHER:—It is no small gratification to find you must take an affectionate leave of me, if it is by note. Your apology for not seeing me more than supplied the visit, because it was an act of favor. [The Bishop was quite sick, and not able to bear company.] Indeed I was weak, and though much better, I am far from strong now, for I tremble, and have to rest while about this letter.

You ask a place in my prayers. If that is a favor, you have possessed it ever since I saw you first. "God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Dear Johnny, permit me to tell you that you possess a full proportion of my confidence and affection. I shall not forget the tenderness and respect, as of a son to a father, with which you treated me; nor the Christian meekness and deep humility depicted in your manners—graces which I hope you will never forfeit your title to. Jesus was meek and lowly of heart. There was an expression in your countenance that attracted my attention, but afforded no satisfactory solution. Have you injured or impaired your constitution by ministerial exertions? or has the climate of affliction reduced you? or are you subject to excessive fasting? Useful fasting is so shamefully neglected, that a check on that subject should be ministered and received with caution. But extremes are dangerous. Your friend and brother,

W. MCKENDREE.

Bishop McKendree attended the New York Con-

ference at Albany, June 4, 1812; the New England Conference at Lynn, Massachusetts, June 20th; the Genesee Conference at Lyons Town, July 23d; various camp-meetings in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee; the Tennessee Conference at Fountain Head, Nov. 10th; the South Carolina Conference at Charleston, Dec. 19th; the Virginia Conference at Newbern, North Carolina, Feb. 10, 1813; the Baltimore Conference in Baltimore, March 24th; and the Philadelphia Conference in Philadelphia, April 24, 1813.

CHAPTER XI.

Difficulties and comforts—New York Conference—New England Conference changed on account of war—Tendency of selling pews—Genesee Conference—Ohio—Steubenville—Tennessee Conference—Cannot attend Louisiana Conference—T. L. Douglass—Bishops Asbury and McKendree on slavery—Blackman's position on the subject—He goes as chaplain to volunteers at the call of General Jackson—Wm. Burke's letter—South Carolina and Virginia Conferences—"Official decisions"—Buxton—New York Conference—Bishop Asbury's opinion of Bishop McKendree's sermon—Joshua Marsden in United States—He applies for employment—Resigns it—Why?—Bishop Asbury's condition—His Will—Why he expected to live long—Painful round of Conferences in 1814—Bishop McKendree's fall—Wounding hip and ribs—Tennessee Conference held at camp-meeting in Logan county, Kentucky—Neither of the Bishops can be at the Mississippi Conference—Genesee Conference—Tornado—Gets to Cincinnati—South Carolina—Virginia—Maryland—Pennsylvania—Asbury preaches—Found Dr. Coke at Albany, New York—Ohio Conference at Mechanicsburg—"Long earnest talk"—Bishop Asbury crosses Alleghany sixty-two times—Both Bishops attend the Tennessee Conference—Separated never to meet again on earth—McKendree at South Carolina Conference—Asbury within thirty miles—Very feeble—Hammet's people return—Virginia Conference at Raleigh—Bishop McKendree's father dies—Baltimore Conference—Bishop Asbury absent, and preaches his last sermon in Richmond, Virginia—His death—Bond's letters inclosing Asbury's views and last letter to McKendree—His person and character.

THE years 1813, 1814, and 1815 were spent, like the previous five years of his life, in almost constant travel, or in holding Conferences. He is forced to exclaim: "No rest; but little chance to read; always having company, and few opportunities of reflection, except on horseback!" But he found this state of things as unfriendly to piety as to peace and quietude. Hard rides, promiscuous crowds at taverns, a diseased body, and constant anxiety of mind in view of his responsible position, chafed and worried him; yet conscious of his own honesty and purity of purpose, he strove to know his duty, and to do it without murmuring. Communion with God and the esteem of the Church were sources of comfort to his heart during many an hour of trial and sorrow. If his labors and afflictions abounded, so did his comforts. He that surrenders his own will to God, will be satisfied to do or suffer as God wills. Happy are they to whom faith gives the victory over sin and self. The longest life is soon over, and in its best condition is still a battle; and not he who suffers least, but he who most bravely and wisely fights that battle at whatever sacrifice, is the greatest victor.

Bishop McKendree presided at the New York Conference held in Amenia, May 20, 1813, where some difficulties among the preachers were amicably adjusted through his prudent and conciliatory manner of conducting the matter, and by the co-operation of Freeborn Garrettson, Daniel Hitt, and L. Clark. "Blessed are the peace-makers."

"The New England Conference for this year was

appointed to be held at New London, but an apprehended attack upon the place by a British squadron, caused it to be removed to Colchester,* thirteen miles distant. It commenced June 31st. The business of Conference was done with great dispatch—sitting eight hours a day—and concluded on the fourth day.” He adds: “It is feared that our preachers and congregations in this part of our work will drop off like untimely fruit. They build meeting-houses upon congregational principles, and the preachers, when they locate, have the art of deriving the benefit. It is reported that they are giving in to the plan of building very expensive and ornamental houses; selling pews, so that it is made difficult for the poor to hear the gospel; and fixing the government in the hands of such as may become owners of pews; so that our itinerant preachers, as well as the poor, may be excluded when men of the world may choose to do so. Are these things so? In part, if not in whole. Has not this course a tendency to injure the progress of experimental religion, and destroy the itinerant plan? It has.”

The Bishops traveled in company to the Genesee Conference at Westmoreland, July 9, 1813, and the tour was rendered more than ordinarily pleasant by the “remarkably social and familiar manner of

* Bishop Hedding says it was Salem. (See his *Life*, p. 229.) Bishop Asbury, in his *Journal*, says Colchester. Bishop McKendree, in his *Diary*, says, “The Conference was moved to Brother Morgan’s, in Colchester.”

Bishop Asbury." Nothing unusual occurring at this Conference, they resumed their long journey westward. Bishop McKendree says: "From this Conference Bishop Asbury traveled more than a week with me on my appointments. His mind was greatly taken up with his contemplated Natchez Conference. He seems determined to go to it, and is much engaged in planning for his journey."

After holding the Ohio Conference at Steubenville, Sept. 1, 1813, Bishop McKendree pushed on to Tennessee, in order to spend his spare time with his aged father, who had removed from Virginia and settled in Sumner county, Tennessee. The Conference was held at Reese's Chapel, in Williamson county, Tennessee, Oct. 1st, and was a camp-meeting Conference. Both of the Bishops were present.

The propriety of forming a new Conference in the Mississippi Territory, which had heretofore been included in the Tennessee Conference, had been submitted by the Bishops to the previous session of this Conference, and having been approved, Bishop Asbury had appointed a session to be held there. It had been his intention to visit it in the interval between the Tennessee and South Carolina Conferences. The appointment was not inserted in the General Minutes, and Bishop McKendree had doubted the expediency of setting it off under existing circumstances. But it was a favorite notion with Bishop Asbury, and, as we have already seen, he had been laying his plans to accomplish it. When, therefore, the Tennessee Conference opened,

they were reminded of their advice given to the Bishops the preceding year, and Bishop McKendree announced his readiness to go and hold the Conference, if he could obtain company for himself, and help for the new Conference. Bishop Asbury, though still extremely anxious to visit that section of the work, confessed that in view of his health, the distance, and his apprehension that he might not only fail to reach it, but put it out of his power to get to the South Carolina Conference also, he felt obliged to decline the attempt; and the Conference dissuaded Bishop McKendree from going, by a resolution "that it was imprudent to venture in the present state of Indian hostilities."

At this Conference, the name of Thomas Logan Douglass, a transfer from the Virginia Conference, first appeared at the Tennessee Conference. He was a native of Person county, North Carolina; had filled some of the most important appointments in the Virginia Conference; was an estimable gentleman, a very fine preacher, and a most popular and useful Presiding Elder.*

* Thomas L. Douglass was of low stature, rotund, and inclined to corpulency. He was naturally amiable and retiring in his manners. He had been Presiding Elder several years, a member of the General Conference of 1812, and was greatly admired for his eloquence in the city of New York during the session. In private, his deportment was such as to gain the esteem of his associates; in the pulpit, he was charming. His voice was remarkable for melody and compass, and was perfectly under his control. He was an excellent divine, had studied the economy of the Church very thoroughly, and was strong in his attachments to the old Methodistic polity. He loved the Church, and the Bishops

Two subjects gave the Bishops much trouble at this Conference—slavery and the war. The Conference was stringent in the application of their rules against buying or selling slaves. Several local preachers had been arrested and tried: in most instances the Quarterly-meeting Conferences had refused to punish them. In one case, however, a local preacher was suspended, and appealed to the Annual Conference. Learner Blackman, his Presiding Elder, defended him. He denied that the general rule applied to the case; urged the inconsistency of receiving and retaining members in the Church who owned them, and of expelling those who bought them; said that the purchaser had made the condition of the slave much better, and may have been influenced by the most humane feelings, such as getting husbands and wives, or parents and children, together; that the Quarterly Conferences in the Nashville District had, in other cases, refused to enforce the construction put upon the law by the Conference, believing that it is no more a sin for preachers than for members to have them. He declared that great harm had already been done by this officious intermeddling with legal and private rights; and finally, that, as he could see no moral wrong in it, provided the slave be treated humanely, he could not and would not conform to their views of the rule. Bishop Asbury said

loved and leaned upon him. No man has done more for Methodism in the Tennessee Conference than Mr. Douglass. The writer loved and revered him as a father; and he knows that Bishops Asbury and McKendree held him in the highest estimation.

nothing. Bishop McKendree, being in the chair, reminded him that he ought to keep the rule or change it. The Conference affirmed the decision of the Quarterly-meeting Conference. It is due, however, to the body to say, that there was a strong minority opposed to such a course.

The war was then raging between our country and England. The Indians on the borders were committing horrid cruelties; and our private members, and many of our local preachers, fired by patriotism and a just sense of duty to their country, rushed, as volunteers, to the scenes of war. A requisition having been made in Tennessee for volunteers to protect Louisiana, General Jackson soon called out a large body; and shortly after the close of the Conference, Learner Blackman, having been invited and commissioned by the General to go with him as chaplain, left his District, and most faithfully and acceptably labored, as a minister of God, in this new and trying position. They went in flat-boats, and his habit was to go from boat to boat and preach to the soldiers and visit the sick. The trip was a long one, and they were disbanded upon their arrival at Natchez, whence Brother Blackman returned forthwith to Tennessee, and resumed the duties of his District. This propensity among the traveling preachers to quit their regular work and enter the army, gave the Bishops much trouble, believing that the regular ministration of the gospel is their proper employment, and that if this should be neglected, the cause of God must suffer seriously. In their opinion, both patriotism

and religion required the traveling ministry to adhere to their appropriate work.

The following letter from an early pioneer preacher in the West, worn down by labor, possesses a melancholy interest. It was written to the Ohio Conference through Bishop McKendree:

Cincinnati, Aug. 24, 1813.

DEAR BROTHER:—I have served in the traveling connection two and twenty years, and, in my weak and feeble way, have devoted my whole time and what few talents I have had to the service of the Church. I have filled some of the hardest and most dangerous stations on the frontiers of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. I have missed attending but two Annual Conferences—the first at Ebenezer, Tennessee, 1801, and the present, 1813. I have served in four General Conferences, and can appeal to Him that searcheth all hearts, that, to the best of my knowledge, I have acted from pure motives, and with no other design than to promote the cause of God and Methodism, which I have always regarded as identical. I can appeal to my brethren, among whom I have labored, and to my traveling brethren, who have been associated with me, that I have not idled away my time in visiting either friends or relatives. I have visited my parents but once, and was then only three weeks with them. In the seventeen years I have been married, I have never taken time to go with my wife to visit her friends and relatives. I have spent neither time nor money in acquiring property, hav-

ing always considered it beneath the dignity of the office I was called to fill, and contrary to the rules and regulations of the traveling ministry. As to this world's goods, I have comparatively nothing. I am still free from every encumbrance of a worldly nature. During the time I have labored with you, I have conscientiously devoted my whole time to the work, and have avoided every needless expense. I have reason to bless God that I am what I am—it is of his unmerited grace. I love God, his people, and his cause.

I have labored for several years under great affliction of mind. Several times I have determined to ask for a location. I am not well. Upon the slightest change of weather I am greatly afflicted with a complaint of my thorax, so that sometimes I almost lose my speech. Through the summer I have thought of locating, but my friends, and my wife especially, discourage this. Something, too, within me forbids it when I think of retiring from the work which I love as I do my life. If my brethren can give me a supernumerary relation, I shall consider myself under obligations to them; but if not, please grant me a location.

May the God of all grace preside over your councils! Your brother, W. BURKE.

In a private note to Bishop McKendree, he insists that a stationed preacher should be sent to Cincinnati the next year; that it must not be put back in the circuit; says they have seven classes and two hundred members; paid his allowance the past year

without his having said a word to them about it, and suggests that Brother Lambdin would suit the people very well. He concludes: "And now, my dear brother, perhaps I may see you no more. When you left this Conference, I lost a valued friend—such a one, perhaps, I shall never find again; but *friendship shall live beyond the grave.*"

These old friends and fellow-laborers have doubtless met, and feel no regrets at having toiled long and suffered much in their Master's vineyard. Now their rest and reward are eternal.

At the South Carolina Conference, in Charleston, Dec. 23, 1812, he says: "The Conference kindly invited me to take one of their body to travel with me at *their expense.*" The generous offer was gratefully accepted, and James Norton was recommended and chosen; and having traveled with the Bishops twelve months, returned with them to the ensuing Conference.

At the Virginia Conference, the Bishops were by vote requested to give an official decision of the question, "Whether a Presiding Elder could lawfully preside over a committee sitting upon the trial of a local preacher." His reply was, "He *can*, and sometimes he *ought* to do so;" but intimated that it is usually best not to do so. Bishop Asbury, not being in the chair, but present, said nothing. The Conference did not demur.

Here, too, "Brother Buxton having objected to the recommendations of certain local preachers for ordination, because the Quarterly Conference which presented them was composed of very few mem-

bers, and having moved that the Conference determine what proportion of the official members of a circuit shall constitute a Conference," the president decided the motion to be out of order, because it would operate against the rule of the General Conference.

At the New York Conference for 1813, Bishop Asbury's Journal says :

"*Sunday, 23d.*—Bishop McKendree preached. It appeared to me as if a ray of divine glory rested on him. His subject was, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' The appearance, manner, and preaching of Brother McKendree produced a powerful effect on Joshua Marsden, a British missionary, who has been present at our Conference."

The name of Mr. Marsden, since so generally and favorably known as a distinguished and useful Wesleyan minister in England, recalls the following facts. This excellent man had been laboring in Bermuda, West Indies, as a missionary for some years. Having obtained leave to return to England, his wife and family had come to New York to visit her parents, and await his arrival; but having been detained longer than he expected, when he reached the United States the embargo law was in force—the war spirit was very rife, and he could not conveniently or safely get back home. Under these circumstances, he attended the New York Conference, and, as appears from his letters, now before the writer, applied to the Bishops for employment while he should be detained here. The

Bishops complied with his request; but he was so harassed and persecuted by political and ecclesiastical zealots, that he felt it his duty to resign the work temporarily assigned him. His letter to the Bishops evinced his intelligence, prudence, and piety.

"No cure for old age" was verified in the case of Bishop Asbury. If indomitable zeal, courage, will, the utmost temperance, and kindest attention of physicians and friends, could have preserved his energies, he would have defied decline. But he was now approaching his seventieth year, and the long battle of life was nearly over. If he had gone by short and easy stages to the more accessible Conferences, rested when weary and worn down by travel and disease, and been contented to suffer his younger colleague to hold the more distant Conferences alone, he might, by divine blessing, have lingered a few more years. Hosts of friends opened their doors to him, and urged him to rest himself and recover his declining health. Rheumatism attacked his feet and limbs. For many weeks, and in midwinter, too, he could not wear a shoe. Sometimes he had to resort to crutches; was frequently unable to get into his humble carriage without help; and often had to preach in a sitting posture. The pains in his jaws and face were sometimes excruciating; his viscera were disordered; he lost weight constantly; his extremities were swollen; and his skin was so shriveled, and his face so pallid, that when his eyes were closed he looked like a corpse. And yet he scorned to rest. After a few hours of fitful sleep he would be up; and the early

dawn of a cold, blustering, wintry morning would find him on his way to a distant Conference. If roots and ruts, rocks and mud-holes, were too severe upon him, and he had to groan, "*My bones, my bones!*" his faithful nurse would place him on horseback until he could endure the fatigue of that mode of traveling no longer. Then, after a little rest at the first house on the roadside—always closing the interview with prayer and exhortation—he would resume his route. He felt that he *ought* to be at every Conference. And duty was law with him. He was a soldier, acting under orders from a Captain who never spared himself; and how could the faithful soldier take repose on a battle-field, where prizes more precious than diadems were to be won or lost? *The Church, the preachers, and the souls of the people*—these were the thoughts that nerved him to go. It was vain to reason with him. Christ had called and chosen him to be a soldier, and his "heart, and mind, and strength" he had long since consecrated to him.

That there was nothing of wild enthusiasm in the mind of Bishop Asbury, but a fervid, intelligent, and apostolic zeal, like that which actuated apostles and martyrs, is evident. His Journal shows that he was fully aware of his condition. Hence, with characteristic brevity and disinterestedness, he says, in June, 1813: "I have made my will, appointing Bishop McKendree, Daniel Hitt, and Henry Boehm, my executors. If I do not in the meantime spend it, I shall leave, when I die, an estate of two thousand dollars, I believe. *I give it all to the Book Con-*

cern. This money, and somewhat more, I have inherited from dear departed Methodist friends in the State of Maryland who died childless, besides some *legacies which I have never taken*. Let all return and continue to aid the cause of piety."

In August, he adds: "I addressed a '*valedictory*' statement of my opinions to Bishop McKendree, on the primitive Church-government and ordination. I shall leave it with my papers." The writer having found this very interesting document among the papers of Bishop McKendree, takes great pleasure in giving it publication. It seems to have been prepared with great care, and was left ready for the press. That it may not be divided, it is reserved for the next chapter.

Many years ago, the writer heard Thomas L. Douglass say that he was much impressed by the remark of Bishop Asbury, that "he expected to live to be an old man, because the divine promise to them who *honor their father and mother*, applied to him." And the evidence is before the writer, that he was in the habit of remitting annually to his widowed mother, in England, while she lived, all he could possibly spare. Surely "he inherited the promise."

The next round of Conference visitation was an unusually painful one to both the Bishops—to Bishop Asbury, on account of his increasing infirmities; and to Bishop McKendree, because of a fall from his horse, which "severely wounded him in his hip and ribs."*

* Bishop McKendree's Journal shows that he attended the Genesee Conference, at Genoa, July 14, 1814; and that Bishop

at the Ohio Conference, and Bishop Asbury, although present, was too feeble to attempt it. Nor did Bishop McKendree recover entirely from the effects of this accident for several months; for at the Tennessee Conference, held at a camp-meeting in Logan county, Kentucky, in 1814, Bishop Asbury says: "The injury received by Bishop McKendree was so great that it is yet doubtful whether he will so far recover as to be present at the South Carolina Conference." Bishop Asbury felt constrained to give up the attempt to visit the Mississippi Conference, lest neither of them should reach the South Carolina Conference.

"*Onward!*" however, was the watchword of these holy and laborious men. The horrors of an Indian

Asbury was absent, on account of illness—that, in passing from Genoa, New York, to Ohio, on the 29th of July, his "horse started suddenly, and threw him with great violence among the rocks, so that his right hip and side suffered considerable injury. That no bones were broken, is wonderful." He adds: "30th.—I was taken in a wagon and carried twelve miles, to my good friend Thomas Weston's. But the roads were rough, and I suffered much." Then follows an account of five deliberate attempts to draw blood from him—failing, finally, owing to the dullness of the old lancet. After confinement to his bed for several days, then using crutches awhile, he attempted to go forward on his journey; but, after accomplishing one-fourth of a mile, he was glad to return. The people, however, came to his place of confinement, and he preached and held class-meeting. After nearly a month's detention, he started to overtake his appointments.

August 25.—He gives an account of a tornado which overtook him on the Alleghany Mountains, when limbs and trees fell all around him. Pushing forward, he got to Cincinnati about the time the Conference adjourned.

war induced them to avoid the Indian Nation by a circuitous route—through the upper part of North Carolina into South Carolina, into Georgia, thence to Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey—to the New York Conference, at Albany, May, 1815, where Bishop Asbury preached the funeral-sermon of Dr. Coke. He says of himself: “Poor, wheezing, groaning, coughing Francis visited the Conference chamber on Tuesday and Thursday.” At the New England Conference, June 1st: “At Unity poor Francis was shut up alone, as at Albany.”* From New Hampshire, back he travels through New York, Pennsylvania—tried to preach at Little York, but wanted strength—thence again across the mountains into Ohio, turning aside to attend a camp-meeting at Mechanicsburg; thence to the Ohio Conference, at Lebanon, September 14, 1815.

About this period, that “long and earnest talk” occurred between our two Bishops, “about the affairs of the Church, and the future prospects,” etc.: “the western part would be the glory of America—would have five Conferences,” etc. Yes, venerable men, in less than half a century from that date, it will have more than ten times five Conferences! The Southern division has now thirty Conferences, and it is presumed the Northern has as many, or more; and “still they come.” At the conclusion of that talk, Bishop Asbury said to his colleague, that, “having passed his *seventieth* year, he found himself

* See Bishop Asbury's letter, June 10, 1815.

unable to keep up with the Conferences." A most reluctant admission. Still on he went, through Kentucky, to the Tennessee Conference, at Bethlehem, Wilson county, Oct. 20, 1815. Here he preached, but says: "*My eyes fail: I will resign the stations to Bishop McKendree.*" Heretofore, if he did little else at Conference, he always attended to stationing the preachers. He knew them all, and knew their fields of labor; and they had the highest confidence in his impartiality and skill in adapting the workmen to the work. But now he resigns this almost last effort at active usefulness. He was now exceedingly emaciated. Consumption seemed to have united with asthma, rheumatism, and gravel, to hasten his exit. Yet the brave old pilgrim must needs follow up the Conferences, and crossed the Alleghanies, about the sixty-second time, to reach the South Carolina Conference. Bishop McKendree's Journal states:

"Bishop Asbury attended the Tennessee Conference in the fall of 1815, which was the last time I was blessed with his personal presence. Here we parted, in hope of meeting again at the South Carolina Conference, in Charleston. For the advantage of accommodations and a better road, he went by Knoxville, and I went through the Cherokee Nation. Bishop Asbury came within thirty or forty miles, but could not reach the Conference, on account of affliction. Here all the remaining members of Mr. Hammet's church, consisting of a few whites and a considerable number of colored people, returned to our Church—a thing

much desired by Mr. Asbury, particularly on account of the colored people, to whom he had acted as a father for several years.

"The Conference kept up a daily communication with Mr. Asbury, and he rejoiced at the success of his long-continued kindness to those solitary and afflicted people.

"At the close of the Conference he was better, and, as my arrangements did not permit me to visit him, I pursued my appointments, hoping to see him at the Virginia Conference; but in this I was sadly disappointed, and learned, by the result, that our interview at the Tennessee Conference closed our joint labors and earthly associations.

"Previously to the Tennessee Conference, Bishop Asbury was with me, at my father's, in the Fountain Head settlement. While we were there; my father took his bed, complaining of nothing but extreme debility. In this situation he remained about two weeks, and died in peace.

"I arrived at Raleigh, North Carolina, in time for the Virginia Conference, much exhausted by traveling and preaching. Here I received an account of the death of my father, and that Bishop Asbury's state of health would not admit of his getting to Conference. In addition to these afflictions, the work of an important Conference devolved on me alone; but I was graciously sustained, and much assisted, by an affectionate and very kind body of preachers. The Conference over, I pursued my appointments, still hoping to meet with Bishop Asbury at the Baltimore Conference.

"The preachers met at the appointed time, and understood the Bishop's health was very bad. My health was delicate, but I was mercifully supported. The preachers felt for me, and rendered me all the aid they could. Their sympathy was a comfort to me."

The following letter from John Wesley Bond, the beloved and faithful traveling companion of Bishop Asbury, inclosing one from Bishop Asbury to Bishop McKendree—perhaps the last he ever wrote—will be read with interest, because it evinces the ruling passion of the dying Bishop, his love of souls, and anxiety for the Church. It was written about a month before his death, while he was trying, "in age and feebleness extreme," to reach the General Conference at Baltimore. In the midst of his deep and complicated afflictions, although so utterly worn down that he alone thought he could travel, and his best friends thought each day's short journey must be his last, this heroic man still struggled forward, and with characteristic disinterestedness employs his thoughts about preachers, and missions, and the General Conference. Noble old man! a martyr's zeal and reward are thine.

At Brother William Williams, 18 miles from
Louisburg, N. C., Feb. 29, 1816.

BISHOP MCKENDREE—*Dear Brother*:—Not knowing where a letter would overtake you, short of Georgetown, I have deferred writing until now, that my letter may give you the latest intelligence.

It would be a great gratification to me if we could get on to the Baltimore Conference; never-

theless, I have constantly opposed making the attempt, well knowing that Father Asbury's health would not admit of it. He is a little better than when I wrote last, but still very feeble. Last Sabbath, for the first time this year, he spoke to the society at Brother King's, in Raleigh. He spoke for some time, and with more strength than I expected. Brother Hinds's Quarterly-meeting commenced in Raleigh on Saturday last. Brother Hynes attended, but, having the fever and ague, was unable to preach. Notwithstanding my frequent loss of sleep, my health is nearly as usual, for which I cannot be sufficiently thankful.

Respecting my next year's appointment, I need say nothing more than this: if I am judged worthy, I am still willing to take my present, or any other work, which may be thought best. As to my pecuniary demands upon Conference, I have none: Father Asbury has insisted on bearing these himself. My expenses he has borne hitherto; and he has paid my quarterage for the first three quarters—the other he will pay when due.

Your affectionate, though younger and unworthy,
brother in the gospel, J. W. BOND.

At Brother Matthew Myrick's,
Brunswick county, Va., March 4, 1816.

P. S. Not having had an opportunity of sending my letter before now, I open it to inform you, that, respecting the missions,* Father Asbury finds his

* Referring, we suppose, to the German population, to whom Bishop Asbury wished missionaries should be sent.

heart much set on them. He says he will hazard an opinion, that you may find in the Schuylkill District alone not less than one hundred vacant or broken congregations, and that the ministers they have, whether regular or irregular, he believes, are just such as the devil would have them to be. The object, then, is sufficient to claim attention: the main object is to get *men*. He thinks Brothers Folks, Fehbye, and Swarwalder, ought to volunteer; but if we cannot get missionaries in the traveling connection, we must get them out of the local. The work is important, the expense considerable: it will not do to be taken up and put down lightly. The printing of so many Hymn-books and Disciplines, together with the support of so many missionaries, will require a fund of four or five thousand dollars; but this will be but like lending it to the missions, for when societies are formed, they will pay it back. In the meantime they must be supported at the outset. He wishes the missionaries to make collections, and try to get a living where they labor—always accountable, as every traveling preacher is, to his Presiding Elder and the Conference for what he receives. All the preachers he desires to exert themselves to make collections for the missionaries; and he thinks the *mile-subscription*, properly attended to, will be competent to make up all missionary deficiencies. He wants the Conference to say what they shall be allowed for quarterage and board. He suggests about \$260 to the married, and \$120 to the unmarried men; and that they should have prompt pay.

Father Asbury thinks there are half a million of Germans in our country—the poorest and richest of any people among us; and that thousands of Africans among us enjoy the advantages of gospel means in a much greater degree than they do.

J. W. BOND.

Here follows the last letter of Bishop Asbury, inclosed, as stated above, to Bishop McKendree. It is suggestive as to the appointments in the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences, and is in the abrupt style of the senior Bishop:

MY DEAR SON:—Were it proper and possible, I should greatly rejoice to be near thee and the Conferences; but perhaps I should weary myself, as I have done, and hinder more than help you.

1. If I may say any thing of the stations: does Joseph Frye hold his zeal? If so, there is no man more fit to preside in the Monongahela District.

2. If we take up German missions, it must be spiritedly. I wish we had four men who would offer freely, and serve faithfully—married or single; our Hymn-book translated; a thousand copies of Discipline, correct from the General Conference. If they will not sell, give them away to the people. Send a missionary to Schuylkill District, Susquehanna, Carlisle, and Monongahela—Presiding Elders holding cash to pay the missionaries quarterly—the missionaries making collections, and being accountable for these also to the Conferences.

I wish the change of Boehm and Roberts,* because of Henry's usefulness in German.

We have covered the three hundred dollars to Virginia Conference. If either Baltimore or Philadelphia is deficient, one or two hundred, we are ready.

Had I power to be present, the stewards would have a correct account of all we have received at Conferences and expended upon road expenses. In 1815 I asked thirty dollars—they sent forty. The incredible toil of Wesley Bond is only known to me: I must reward him. His character is good; he has attempted to moderate his sermons; preaches to acceptance—generally beloved by the preachers and people.

I have written to the General Conference: wish you to see it. I have written to Mr. Benson,† and wish the General Conference to hear a copy of the letter read. In great love,

F. ASBURY.

At the close of the Baltimore Conference, Bishop McKendree started for the Philadelphia Conference, in company with his old friend, Rev. Nelson Reed; but, after one day's journey, he was violently attacked with rheumatism. The disease having apparently abated, after a week, he tried to proceed;

* Robert R. Roberts was then Presiding Elder of Schuylkill District, and Henry Boehm of Chesapeake District. He suggests a change of Districts between these men. The former was made Bishop in about a month.

† This was in answer to a letter from the British Conference, inviting him to visit England.

but the first day's travel brought on another attack, and, finding it impossible to go forward, he submitted to necessity, and was, after awhile, taken to the house of his old friend, Dr. Wilkins, of Baltimore. Here he stayed until the 2d of May, when the General Conference began in Baltimore.

While Bishop McKendree was confined to his bed, between Baltimore and Philadelphia, he received intelligence of the death of his venerated and beloved colleague. After a partial recovery from his attack near Charleston, South Carolina, Bishop Asbury came by easy stages to Richmond, Virginia. There (March 24th) he preached his last sermon. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, he traveled, being very intent on getting to the General Conference. He got to the house of his old friend, Mr. George Arnold, on Friday night, about twenty miles south of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Rain prevented his traveling on Saturday, and on Sunday he died.

It need scarcely be said that Bishop Asbury's death was consistent with his life. "I die daily; I live in God," had been his motto. On Saturday afternoon, hearing his faithful and never-to-be-forgotten nurse, John Wesley Bond, talking with the family about having preaching next day, he said, "You need not be in haste." This excited their apprehensions, for they do not seem to have anticipated he would die then. Through the ensuing night he grew worse, but refused to have a physician, saying the doctor could only pronounce him dead. Being asked if he had any thing to communicate, he replied, that having fully ex-

pressed his mind in relation to the Church, in his address to the Bishop and the General Conference, he had *nothing more to add*. About eleven o'clock on Sabbath morning, he called on Brother Bond to sing, pray, and expound the 21st chapter of Revelation, and appeared calm and devout during these exercises. When he could no longer swallow nor speak, seeing the distress of his friends, he looked joyfully at Brother Bond and raised his hand. When asked if he then felt the victory complete, exerting all his remaining strength, he raised both his hands, and in a few minutes died without a struggle or a groan, as a weary child sinks to sleep upon its mother's breast. He died on the 31st of March, 1816.

Thus closed the earthly career of a man who had spent fifty-five years in the ministry, ten in Great Britain, and forty-five in America—thirty-two of them as an itinerant Bishop; a man who had traveled, in the United States, more miles, preached more sermons, endured more hardships, and had borne heavier responsibilities than any other minister in America, before or since his time; a man of astonishing sagacity, and whose life was "without spot, blemish, or any such thing." He was a wise, good, and great man; and Methodism in America is more indebted to him than to any other man. Whether viewed as a man, a Christian, a preacher, or a Bishop, in every respect he seems to have been as nearly perfect as frail humanity can well be on earth. But we are not writing his biography, and his life is his eulogy.

What Moses was to the Church in the wilderness, as its leader and counselor, Asbury was to American Methodism. In meekness he declined the honors of the Episcopacy, tendered him by Mr. Wesley, until urged to it by the unanimous voice of his brethren. God endued him with wisdom to organize and rule the infant Church—for nearly forty years he was its unquestioned earthly head. But, unlike Moses, he lived to lead the tribes of our Israel out of the wilderness, and to see them settled in peace and prosperity over a vast continent. The Jews had but one Moses, and American Methodism but one Asbury. Surely “a prince and a great man in Israel” died when he passed away.*

* The description of Bishop Asbury’s person, as he appeared in the first Conference held in New England, in 1792, and the delineation of his character, by Dr. Stevens, in his “Memorials of Methodism,” are so beautiful and true that we cannot resist the inclination to quote them:

“He was yet short of fifty years of age, and in the maturity of his physical and intellectual strength. His person was slight, but vigorous and erect; his eye, stern but bright. His brow began to show those wrinkles (the effects of extraordinary cares and fatigues) which afterward formed so marked a feature of his strongly characteristic face. His countenance was expressive of decision, energy, sagacity, benignity, and was shaded at times by an aspect of deep anxiety, if not depression. His attitude was dignified and graceful; his voice, sonorous and commanding. His parallel for practical sense and practical energy can scarcely be found. As a ruler of State or a commander of armies, he would have ranked among the greatest men of history. We will venture the remark, in all deliberation, that if ever an impartial ecclesiastical history of

this nation be written, Francis Asbury, as well for his personal character as for being the chief founder of its largest religious organization, will occupy a position in it above the competition of any other name whatsoever. During about fifty years, it is estimated that, besides innumerable public exhortations, he preached upon an average about one sermon a day. He exceeded even Wesley in his travels—averaging more than six thousand miles a year. The extent of his journeys during his ministry of forty-five years in the United States alone, was equal, upon an average, to the circumference of the globe every four years—and this by private conveyance, over the worst roads, in the infancy of the nation. During the last thirty-two years of his life, he presided in two hundred and thirty-four Annual Conferences, and ordained about four thousand persons in the traveling or local ministry. ‘When he commenced his labors in this country, there were about six hundred members : when he fell, it was victoriously at the head of two hundred and twelve thousand.’”

CHAPTER XII.

Bishop Asbury's Valedictory—His Birth—Death—Burial—Remains removed to Baltimore.

THE following is the "Address to the Bishop," referred to in Bishop Asbury's dying words. As Paul in prison addresses Timothy, so the senior addresses his junior in this epistle. It is the result of his mature reflection, after much study and long observation. Some things, especially toward the beginning, which refer merely to the mode of carrying out his plan, he might have modified, had he foreseen the future; but as a whole, it needs neither apology nor explanation. It was evidently designed for the press, and after having been most carefully and in a most scholarly manner prepared, was subscribed by his own hand. It is given *verbatim et literatim*.

A VALEDICTORY ADDRESS TO WILLIAM McKENDREE, BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. BY FRANCIS ASBURY.

[Advertisement.]

Speaking to the Genesee Annual Conference, in your presence, on the subject of Apostolical, Missionary, Methodist Episcopal Church-government, I was desired to commit my thoughts to writing. I

feel the more disposed to do this, that I may leave a written testimony which may be seen, read, and known when your friend and father is taken from the evil to come.

SIR:—My advice is, that there may be only three effective Bishops, as from the beginning, traveling through the whole continent—each one to preside alternately in all the Annual Conferences; one to preside during the sitting of the same Conference, the other two to have charge of and plan the stations and perform ordinations, assisted by the Elders in both branches. The plan of stations should be submitted to the President of the Conferences, in triune order, to give a final decision before it is read out. I wish to warn you against the growing evil of locality in Bishops, Elders, preachers, or Conferences. Locality is essential to cities and towns, but traveling is as essential to the country. Were I to name cities, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome, with all the great cities, both ancient and modern, what havoc have these made in the Churches! Alas for us! out of seven hundred traveling preachers, we have about one hundred located in towns, and cities, and small, rich circuits. Guard particularly against two orders of preachers—the one for the country, the other for the cities: the latter generally settle themselves to purchase ministers, and too often men of gifts and learning intend to set themselves to sale.

I am bold to say that the apostolic order of things was lost in the first century, when Church-govern-

ments were adulterated and had much corruption attached to them. At the Reformation, the reformers only beat off a part of the rubbish, which put a stop to the rapid increase of absurdities at that time; but how have they increased since! Recollect the state of the different Churches, as it respects government and discipline, in the seventeenth century; when the Lord raised up that great and good man, John Wesley, who formed an evangelical society in England. In 1784, an apostolical form of Church-government was formed in the United States of America, at the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland.

You know, my brother, that the present ministerial cant is, that we cannot now, as in former apostolical days, have such doctrines, such discipline, such convictions, such conversions, such witnesses of sanctification, and such holy men. But I say that we can; I say we must; yea, I say we have. And can men claim the rights and privileges of apostles, if they are impostors and not true ministers of the holy sanctuary? Instead of *going* to preach, they *stay* to preach. Hence it is that schools, colleges, and universities undertake to make men ministers that the Lord Jesus Christ never commanded to be made. The present Episcopal Churches are greatly independent of each other. All the numerous orders of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, are also local. If we wish to see pure and unadulterated Church-history, let us go to the Acts of the Apostles, and mark the

characters of those ministers in the time of persecution—such as Paul, Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, Archippus, Trophimus, Artemas, Luke, Epaphroditus, etc.—men who did honor to themselves as ministers of Christ. But there are too many the opposite of these, whom we can view in no other light, at present, than as men going into the ministry by their learning—sent by their parents, or moved by pride, the love of ease, money, or honor. Are not such moved by Satan, more than by the Holy Ghost, to assume the sacred office of the holy ministry? Mark well what a situation the apostles were in. If unfaithful in the discharge of their duty, God would condemn and punish them the most severely. On the other hand, the people were ready to starve, stone, or beat them to death. Modern priests will please the people, that they may not be starved or beaten; but will not God condemn such teachers to everlasting destruction? We lay no claim to the Latin, Greek, English, Lutheran, Swedish, or Protestant Episcopal Church-order. It will be seen that we are so unlike them that we could not stand as related to them. Would their Bishops ride five or six thousand miles in nine months, for eighty dollars a year, with their traveling expense, less or more—preach daily, when opportunity serves, meet a number of camp-meetings in the year, make arrangements for stationing seven hundred preachers, ordain a hundred more annually, ride through all kinds of weather, and along roads in the worst state, at our time of life—the one sixty-nine, the other in his fifty-sixth year?

When the Methodist preachers came first to this country, one-half of the continent was overspread with different names and orders of Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, English, French, German, Holland, Scotch, and Irish, with many Quakers. In the Southern part were Episcopalians. They had but few churches, and no Bishops. At this time the Methodists were, among others, not organized, and had not the ordinances among us. As some in pleasantry said, "We were a Church, and no Church." In some places, we communed with the Episcopalians. In 1779, some of our brethren in Virginia attempted to organize themselves into a Church; but in 1780, the writer of this address visited them, when they agreed to suspend their administration, and with united voice call upon Mr. Wesley to make some provision for them. Accordingly, in 1784, our faithful father, Mr. Wesley, ordained Thomas Coke Bishop, or General Superintendent; and Francis Asbury was elected by the General Conference held in Baltimore, Maryland, December, 1784, General Superintendent—was first ordained Deacon and Elder; on the 27th day of December, Bishop, or General Superintendent; Richard Whatcoat in May, 1800; and William McKendree in May, 1808. Dr. Coke was ordained Deacon and Elder by two scriptural English Bishops, and so was John Wesley. Do any ancient or modern Churches stand on any better ground than we do with respect to ordination, with John Wesley's apostolic right? Probably Paul was ordained with Barnabas. Acts xiii. 1-3.

Should any ask why we did not seek ordination from other Churches, we answer them by asking if we should go to local men to be ordained traveling Bishops. Should we go to Presbyterians to be ordained Episcopal Methodists? or to Episcopalians, who at that time had no Bishop, or power of ordination, in the United States, till application was made to the British Parliament, and that legislative body passed a law for the express purpose, authorizing their Bishops to consecrate and ordain Bishops for the thirteen States of America, in 1785? Here let it be observed, that the Methodist was the first Church organized after the establishment of peace in 1783, and that the Protestant Episcopalians were not organized as a Church until after there was a law passed by the British Parliament. Or could we subscribe to Calvinian articles? Surely, no. Or could we submit to locality? By no means. Let local men ordain local men, baptize or rebaptize local men: we must shape our course otherwise, and prepare to meet the different Annual Conferences from Maine to Georgia and the Mississippi; and to retain all the ancient essential branches of Methodism, in all its parts; and try sacredly to maintain our traveling plan, and support a true missionary, apostolic Church. And suppose this excellent constitution and order of things should be broken, what shall the present or future Bishops do? Let them do as your noble countryman* did—resign and retire into private life.

* General Washington.

It is a serious thing for a Bishop to be stripped of any constitutional rights chartered to him at his ordination, without which he could not, and would not, have entered into that sacred office—he being conscious at the same time he had never violated those sacred rights. Comparing human Church-history with the Acts of the Apostles, it will manifestly appear that the apostolic order of things ended in about fifty years. With the preachers and people of that day, the golden order was lost. But we must restore and retain primitive order: we must, we will, have the same doctrine, the same spirituality, the same power in ordinances, in ordination, and in spirit.

Joseph Pilmoor had been but a short time on his mission to this country before he saw that it would not be proper for the Methodists to continue an Episcopal Society. He was for forming an independent Church of England. Mr. Wesley was called for near twelve or thirteen years, repeatedly, to do something for his people in America. Dr. Whitehead reproached Mr. Wesley, in writing his Life, for ordaining preachers in America, unless he had the voice of preachers and people in America; yet, if my memory serves me right, the Doctor grants Mr. Wesley's right so to do, if he had had their voice; and this he most assuredly had, and it had been communicated to him by word and letter; or why did every heart leap with joy, and the members of Society and the congregations in America embrace our Church-form and order, and by thousands giving up themselves to the ordinances, and

presenting their children for baptism, for nearly thirty years last past?

You have often heard me say that Church-governments changed with the Church into strange, incredible forms—as monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, and legal establishments; when scholars, lawyers, doctors, and peers became bishops, and bishops became kings, temporal princes and peers, and presbyters became assemblymen and senators: in this country they become chaplains to Congress; yea, members of Congress! It will come to this conclusion, that ours is the apostolic plan. But say you, Are all apostles? Are all that we have ordained holy men? They might have been. Were Judas, Simon Magus, and Demas faithful unto death? Ministers may fall from grace and office; and no wonder if we, in ordaining four thousand local, and nearly two thousand traveling, preachers, should find some to turn out apostates.

Thus I have traced regular order and succession in John Wesley, Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, and William McKendree. Let any other Church trace its succession as direct and as pure, if they can. Does any one doubt the experience, piety, or labors of these men, so long tried, known, and read of all men, both friends and enemies, for so many years?

William P. Otterbein, of Baltimore, a regular Presbyterian—the German apostle to America—whose piety, labors, and learning were great: this man of God assisted T. Coke, R. Whatcoat, and T. Vasey in the ordination of Francis Asbury. You

will say, If our Church were as pure as the primitive Church, will it not, may it not, like other modern, decline? I answer, We live in a purer age, and in a free country. If discipline be maintained, men that carry sand instead of salt for the sheep will be constrained soon to leave us, to join some more honorable, but perhaps fallen, Church, where they can have more ease and greater emoluments. We have lived to see the end of such persons who left us and set up for themselves—witness Hammet and O'Kelly.

Thomas Haweis, a moderate Episcopalian—fifty years a beneficed minister—is one of the most impartial historians on the subject of Episcopacy. I shall close this address with several quotations from his work, wherein you will see that he, without knowledge or design, has given the order of Episcopal Methodism the plume of honor above all others:

“From the morning spread upon the mountains to the meridian splendor of the Sun of righteousness, I wish to trace the progress of his gospel amidst the storms of persecution, till his glory shall be finally revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Contemptuous infidelity, proud philosophy, bigoted superstition, atheistical immorality, heretical and schismatical pravity, may unite their powers against the child Jesus and his everlasting gospel, but the gates of hell shall never prevail. His persecuted Church shall rise. I have continued to prefer an Episcopal mode of Church-government, unless I

can find a better. I am satisfied that the Methodist mode of Episcopal government is more apostolic than the Church of England ever was, will, or can be, without a radical reformation from its essential form of locality, written sermons and prayers, State laws, and human policy." (Vol. I., p. 12, of his Introduction.)

"When I speak of Episcopacy as most correspondent in my poor idea to the apostolic practice and general usage of the Church in the first and generally esteemed purer ages, let no man imagine I plead for that Episcopacy which, rising very early on the stilts of practical pride and worldly-mindedness, has since overspread the earth with its baneful shadow; or suppose those to be the true successors of the apostles, who, grasping at power and pre-eminence over Churches which their labors never planted nor watered—claiming dominion over districts, provinces, and kingdoms beyond all power of individual superintendency." (P. 14.)

Here, Bishop, mark—"planted or watered." We have planted and watered: although our continent is three thousand miles in length, we have measured it year after year—embracing fifty-one or two districts, about six hundred circuits, and nine Annual Conferences, all which, with very few exceptions, we have visited. Then, according to our author, we are apostolic bishops; for we have both planted and watered, and do water still. As to temporal power, what have we to do with that in this country? We are not senators, congressmen, nor chaplains; neither do we hold any civil offices. We

neither have, nor wish to have, any thing to do with the government of the States, nor, as I conceive, do the States fear us. Our kingdom is not of this world. For near half a century we have never grasped at power.

“All united in one Church-fellowship, [so the Methodists,] under the superintendency of apostolic men at first, and on their decease, the most distinguished for zeal, wisdom, sufferings, influence, or respectability of any kind, was called by the suffrage of the elders and people to be their superintendent, president, *præses*; *hegoumenos*, a leader; and thus the name of bishop, (*kat' exochen*,) on account of preëminence, became very early appropriate to one who was *primus inter pares*; and, as Archbishop Usher says, differed only in degree of advancement, and not in order. These were, I apprehend, always from the apostolic days, raised to their station by the voice of the people and their fellows. They presided in the deliberations of their several Churches, with the presbyters, their assessors. They were deputed to all synods which treated of ecclesiastical matters; and whilst every congregation judged its own members, they received the accusations against elders who were charged with offenses, and censured or removed them. They examined the chosen candidates for the ministry, and with the presbyter, ordained them by imposition of hands. This dangerous eminence marked them as peculiar victims in days of persecution. Far, therefore, from being an enviable or desirable situation, no man dare to aspire after or occupy it,

but such as counted their lives not dear unto themselves, that they 'might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received from the Lord to fulfill it,' whether as confessors or martyrs." (P. 16.)

"The sudden ability of illiterate men of so great a number in a moment, and with perfection to speak in all languages—to express themselves with such propriety and force as not only to be clearly understood, but impressive on the consciences of the numerous foreigners then at Jerusalem from every nation under heaven—such a phenomenon could not but strike the hearers with astonishment, and afford an evidence of divine agency too incontestible to admit of a rational doubt." (P. 28.)

Now, Bishop McKendree, I will make this remark, that to take this transaction of the Divine Spirit prophetically, it saith to every minister, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and that in all ages to come, unlettered men should be raised up to preach the gospel with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. One may say, This man speaks well!—ah, he is a college-taught man! Again it may be said, This man speaks well: he is a scholar! But you are mistaken. He has only a common education—a plowman, a tailor, a carpenter, or a shoemaker! Then he must be taught of God, if he is not taught of man. Then we may rationally conclude that learning is not an essential qualification to preach the gospel. It may be said, no man but a fool will speak against learning. I have not spoken against

learning. I have only said that it cannot be said to be an essential qualification to preach the gospel. It was once reported that two impostors (Roman priests) came to England, entered themselves as porters or draymen, but said they had received the gift of tongues, and were called to preach. But Dr. Doddridge, being in the city, was requested to examine them, and found they were scholars; but when he examined them in Welsh, the cheat was found out. And too often the learned priests deceive the people by their learning, or professing so to be; because the first preachers were blest with the gift of tongues immediately from heaven: so that a man must spend four or seven years in learning languages before he is permitted to preach the gospel. And who is to decide the question? Their practice and that of our Lord does not strictly agree.

But to our author. "The Church at Jerusalem seems to have been under the presidency of the Apostle James. The great luminary was now rising to carry the light of the everlasting gospel into the heathen nations, and to display a scene of labors and successes unequalled in the records of the Christian Church. The greater part of the Acts contain the account of his (Paul's) life and labors, recorded by his faithful attendant and companion in the work, Luke the Evangelist. Paul stands allowedly in the first ranks of eminence—in nothing behind the very chief of the apostles—whilst the generality of the others were out of the lowest orders of society, (*agrammatotai kai tdiotai*,)—un-

lettered or private, and laymen—(Acts iv. 13;) men of no literary acquirements. Paul seems to have been born in the superior ranks of life.” (Pp. 30, 31, 33.)

Thus not many wise nor rich men of the earth, in the past as well as the present age, have obeyed the call of the gospel.

“He (Paul) flew as with the wings of a seraph over the habitable globe; and the vastness of his success corresponded with the rapidity of his movements, and the indefatigable labors of his ministry. From Damascus to Arabia, Judea, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and round about Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. Returning with the same unwearied diligence to visit all the Churches his ministry had planted, he received a divine intimation that he must shortly visit Italy also. And he extended his views into Spain. An eye (geographical) cast over this immense tract of country will fill us with astonishment, how one man’s labor could fill so extensive a sphere, and demonstrates how much may be done when the Spirit of Jesus animates, and the benedictions of the Holy Ghost accompanies the word with power and much assurance. There is one particular I may not forget, and which we Gentiles are bound to acknowledge with peculiar thankfulness—that he is our apostle. A ministry of more than thirty years was terminated, it is probable, by martyrdom.” (Pp. 36, 37.)

“I regard Paul as the first of human beings, to whom more are indebted for salvation, under the

great Head of the Church, than to any other creature. If his labors and preaching, as recorded, be taken into the account; if we consider his Epistles to the several Churches—the inestimably blessed effects of which must be felt and acknowledged in all Churches to the end of time.” (P. 38.)

“It seems to have been a matter decided by the Church, respecting the two *itinerant* apostles, that Paul should go to the Gentiles, and Peter to the circumcision. I suppose there was great wisdom herein displayed.” (P. 40.)

“A multitude of worthies have their names recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, whose *itinerant* labors, with those of Paul, had the most powerful tendency to spread the Christian faith.” (P. 47.)

“A Church without evidence of the influence and experience of the operation of the Holy Ghost hath but a name to live, and is dead; and whatever may be its forms, or however sound its Confession of Faith, it hath no more title to be reckoned a Christian Church than a statue or corpse to be esteemed a living man. The form in which the Church appeared in the best—the primitive age, under the immediate inspection of the apostles and disciples of the Lord—deserves our consideration. And here, drawing around me the sacred circle, I wish to confine myself to the words of the Holy Ghost, without any regard to the traditions of men. And I shall begin at Jerusalem. This was the fruitful womb from whence issued the noble army of martyrs, confessors, and evangelists, who, holding up

the word of light, diffused the blessings of the glory of God the Saviour to the ends of the earth. These were the fruits of our Lord's ministry during his labors in Judea and the adjacent countries. They consisted of twelve men, first chosen, called apostles, or *persons sent*. To these were added seventy others, who were sent out to preach and teach. They were all endowed with miraculous powers; and on their return from their itinerancy through the nation, reported, with triumph, the wonders they had wrought. About five hundred brethren were summoned to behold our Lord's ascension into heaven." (P. 52.)

"Three thousand believed on the first day (Pentecost), and myriads followed them. The immensity of this number affords us two views of their Church-order: First, as necessarily distributed into various congregations, no one place being capable of containing such myriads, nor any one bishop or elder sufficient to administer the ordinances among them. We accordingly find them breaking bread from house to house; (Acts ii. 46;) preaching and teaching in every house, (Acts v. 42,) which seems to describe the Church at Jerusalem. Second, these several *house-churches* formed one united Church-body under the presidency of James, and not Peter. (Acts xv. 13.) He was at the head of the first council. To him Paul addressed himself, (Acts xxi. 18,) when all the elders or presbyters being assembled by him, he reported to them the happy success of his ministry among the Gentiles. The necessity of a president where so great a number

of elders resided, and so many congregations were formed, seems as natural for the preservation of order as it appears actually the case in this mother of all the Churches." (Pp. 54, 55.)

"The care of the poor widows led to the institution of the order of deacons. This originated in a complaint of real or supposed partiality in the distribution of the alms of the faithful to the native Jewish widows, in preference to the Hellenists. (Acts vi. 1.) The apostles themselves being too much engaged to attend to these temporal concerns, recommended it to the Church to elect seven persons for the discharge of this office. These were accordingly chosen by general suffrage, not for each separate congregation, but for the whole body, and were set apart by the apostles, after solemn prayer and imposition of hands, to this service. Though the care of the widows was immediately intrusted to them, it prevented them not from being employed in other labors of love. Philip was an evangelist, and Stephen a like zealous advocate of Christ and his cause. In consequence of his boldness in the synagogue of the Libertines, the blood of this first martyr was shed by the fury of his enemies; and a great and general persecution following, all the principal disciples were dispersed except the apostles, who remained at Jerusalem. (Acts viii. 1.) These flying in different directions, everywhere preached the gospel, and with great success through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; and some as far as Antioch, Damascus, Phenice, and Cypress. They were village-preachers, highway-

preachers, and were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Paul, (Acts xxiv. 23,) in revisiting the Churches which had been planted principally by himself, edifies, comforts, and establishes them by ordaining elders in every Church with prayers and fasting." (P. 56.)

"Returning through Pisidia and Attalia, they arrived happily at Antioch, communicating the glad tidings of their success, and of the Gentile Churches which they had planted. I can only observe here, that I find in all these widely-dispersed and numerous congregations, no mention made of any appointment but that of presbyters, all cemented in one bond of union under the supervisal of the great *itinerant evangelists*." (P. 62.)

And so it should have continued, and would have continued, if there had been a succession of a faithful seed of holy men to follow apostolic order, but as early as the second century they must have their *local* bishops, or local apostles.

"Though James was not superior to Peter or the other apostles at Jerusalem, [he may mean he was not superior as to age, gifts, or standing; but certainly he was superior, inasmuch as he had never so publicly denied his Lord,] he had been evidently appointed to fill the place of president, or *primus inter pares*. Yet, neither he nor any of his apostolic associates assumed to themselves authority to decide but by the suffrage of the whole body of the Church, under immediate divine direction." (P. 63.)

Our Annual, or more particularly, our General Conference, resembles this grand Council at Jeru-

salem, where James presided, and all the other apostles, elders, and brethren solemnly discussed the cause or causes before them, and James pronounced sentence according to the unanimous suffrage of the assembly; and the definitive decree was in favor of Gentile liberty.

Paul and Barnabas separated for awhile; (Acts xv. 39;) but probably God overruled this for good, and perhaps the Churches were more profited by their distinct labors than if they had traveled in company.

Dr. Haweis continues: "It is evident that Timothy was still but a youth, (ch. iv. 14,) and whatever office he sustained, or with whatever gifts he was endued, he received them by the laying on of Paul's hands and of the presbytery. (1. Tim. iv. 14.) Did presbyters then ordain bishops, or were the terms synonymous?" Query—Had there not been two distinct acts in his ordination? Compare 1 Tim. iv. 14, and 2 Tim. i. 6, "The laying on the hands of the presbytery." "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." "That Timothy was left at Ephesus with *superintending* authority, where there were many bishops, is evident. (1 Tim. i. 3.) He was enjoined to encourage and honor those who presided over the congregations well, and especially such as were more actively laborious in preaching and catechising. (Ver. 18.) Respecting hands, he was to lay hands suddenly on no man; and, without partiality or personal respect, he was to admit none into the ministry but after proper examination and conviction

of their call and qualifications. He was also cautiously to receive and weigh accusations against elders who should give offense, and pronounce the sentence due to their unfaithfulness—acts strongly marking superior jurisdiction; and I hence infer that particular Churches neither ordained nor censured their own ministers, although they elected and recommended; and, if faulty, accused them by two or three witnesses before the great itinerant evangelists.” (P. 76.)

Mark well the similarity of apostolic order and government and the Methodist Episcopal form of things!

In the Second Epistle to Timothy, Paul appears to have “returned again to the house of his prison at Rome, and ready to be offered up on the altar of martyrdom. He had detached his faithful itinerant helpers to a variety of services: [although a prisoner, yet clothed with the authority of Christ, he appointed men of God their work:] Crescens, to Galatia; Titus, to Dalmatia; while Timothy himself had been left in Asia, from whence he was shortly to proceed to Rome with Mark, who had once departed from the work, but had now returned to the labors and dangers of itinerancy. The principal subject of the Epistle is the dying charge of the great apostle to his beloved son respecting his own teaching and conduct, and worthy the attentive consideration of every bishop or presbyter upon earth.” (See p. 77.)

Paul’s two favored sons, Timothy and Titus, were his chief companions, and greatly employed in the

regulation of the congregations which had been raised by his labors. The postscript of his first Epistle calls Timothy the first Bishop of the Church of the Ephesians; but there is no such title given him by Paul, nor any intimation of his being at Ephesus but as one of the great *itinerant evangelists*—the companion of Paul, and deputed by him to assist in bringing the congregations into a regular order of worship and discipline.

“It nowhere appears that Titus was more the Bishop of Crete than of Dalmatia, (2 Tim. iv. 10,) or of Nicopolis, (Titus iii. 2,) nor had any fixed residence or diocese—he being one of the great itinerant evangelists who went about preaching everywhere, in season, out of season. And therefore, as soon as he had settled the Cretan Church in the most edifying manner, he was ordered to come and winter with Paul at Nicopolis, and Artemas or Tychicus should be dispatched to fill his place in the Cretan congregations.

“A general superiority in all the Churches which they visited, appears to have been exercised by these great evangelists, though none appears stationary in any one place. They ordained, censured, regulated, were the cementing bond of union to the different Churches, [so should the Methodist Bishops be,] maintaining a unity of order and procedure through the whole. They all bore the name of apostles, (2 Cor. viii. 23,) were everywhere received with reverence, and obeyed with filial affection. [“If any inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or our brethren be

inquired of, they are the messengers of the Churches and the glory of Christ.”] They assumed no domain over their faith, but were helpers of the joy of the faithful wherever they went. The gifts, abilities, and zeal which they displayed, with every divine temper which adorns the Christian ministry, could not but give them weight and procure them influence, by whatever name they might be distinguished; and in every Christian Church, in the very nature of things, such men must possess superiority, whatever be its constitution. Even where the most absolute parity is established, to these their fellows naturally give place. They are the presidents in all associations; heard with respect, commanding obedience; capable of swaying the decisions of their brethren; consulted in all difficult cases, and placed foremost in the hour of danger. To them is intrusted the care of eleemosynary distributions for the benefit of the body to which they belong; and, in private and public, all concede to them the seal of honor.” (P. 78.)

If the Elders that rule well are worthy of double honor, then the Bishops that rule well must be worthy of triple honor, especially when they do so large a part of ruling, preaching, and presiding in Conferences.

“In the primitive Church, [in speaking or writing, it was common to consolidate the first Churches into one, although they consisted of many societies—so we say the Methodist Episcopal Church,] this superiority was vested in the apostles and their companions—the great itinerant evangelists, Barnabas,

Silas, Artemas, Tychicus, Trophimus, Titus, Timothy, and many others, *chief men among the brethren.*" (P. 79.)

Notwithstanding all these were great men in the Church of God, yet, as we have seen, none of them were writers. The Epistle to Titus bears some resemblance to that to Timothy. Men placed in similar situations were called to act under the same principles, and to employ the same means. If we are willing, here we may see the propriety of our Superintendency, Presiding Elders, as in the second part of the primitive Church—which order was lost in the first, and not found again until the seventeenth century, partially in Europe, but more perfectly in America, in the organization and establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"I conclude, as soon as a little society was formed of Christians, a room was opened for their assembling, and the most apt to teach appointed to minister to them in holy things. [Perhaps not unlike a class-leader and local preacher in one.] He was a man of gravity, generally of the more aged, approved by his fellows, and willing to devote himself to their service. His appointment was signified by prayer, and imposition of hands by the Apostle Paul or some of the itinerant evangelists, and the presbytery; and without this I meet no ordination. Every Church [that is, every society] exercised discipline over its own members, to admit, admonish, or expel. Before these itinerating evangelists all accusations against offending presbyters were brought. [These evangelists seem not to have been

stationary, but to have gone about everywhere, chiefly under the direction of the Apostle Paul.]

"These evangelists were usually supported by the Churches, [or societies,] but often, like Paul, maintained themselves by their own labors. During the first ages, the ministry was not appropriated to gentlemen or scholars. No man was bred to it as a profession, or went into it for a maintenance. They were pastors of a different stamp. The stationary presbyters, or bishops, during the lives of the apostle and his associate evangelists, were under their superintendency. But it will appear very early in the second century, when the first race of great itinerants departed, [or were slain for the testimony of Jesus,] that one among the ministers in every place began to have the name of bishop (*kgt' exöchen*) on account of preëminency, with presbyters, his coadjutors, acting with him as one body." (Pp. 86, 87.)

This leads me to conclude that there were no local Bishops until the second century—that the apostles, in service, were Bishops, and that those who were ordained in the second century mistook their calling when they became local, and should have followed those bright examples in the apostolic age. I am not under the difficulties that some are, respecting the same men who were ordained Elders being called sometimes Bishops: I am not sure that what was written to Timothy and Titus—that *they themselves must be blameless as Bishops, or overseers*—excluded them from being evangelists. As to those at Ephesus who were Elders in office,

they were in charge and duty overseers. In some sense, among us, every leader of a class, every local preacher, traveling preacher, and every officer in the Church, may be called an overseer. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons, seem to have been the established form in all the Asiatic Churches, in the second century.

“Hitherto not a man eminent for science or letters had appeared in the Church. All those whose works have come down to us, bear a stamp of simplicity divested of human attainments. Yet by these the gospel had been supported in its purity, afforded a noble army of martyrs, and been spread to the ends of the earth, from the Pillars of Hercules to the Parthians, from the savage nations of the North to the Indies and Abyssinia.” (P. 146.)

“Considering the time and regarding the persons called to be saints, a learned ministry cannot be supposed in the primitive Church. The presbyters have been, in general, men simple and unlettered, though full of faith and the Holy Ghost—the qualifications which then determined the suffrage of the several flocks. And after all the fine things so elegantly written (by the heathen philosophers) about virtue and morals, their own conduct afforded a pregnant example of the impotence of the doctrines which they taught; whilst the Christian bishops not only lived what they professed to teach, but were every day ready to go to prison and to death for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (P. 126.) No man counting his life dear who stood for Jesus, “bold to seal the truth with blood.”

"A learned and ingenious age prides itself on its superiority in defense of revealed religion, and apologizes for the Bible; but what hath (this mode) of arguing proved? The plain story of a plain, unlettered man, telling of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which hath followed, with their consequences, hath done more in the way of conversion to real and vital Christianity than all these great polemics put together. [The learned may smile in Saul's armor, but give me the sling and the stone, and the gigantic Goliath falls.] I see the smile on the wise academician and the contemptuous infidel; but I am not ashamed of that gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, nor of the sound though unlearned teacher who, having diligently read his Bible and been taught of God himself, is blessed with their conversion." (P. 148.)

O my son, by *diligence*, *discipline*, and *faithfulness*, God hath made us a blessing to hundreds and thousands of those who have died within these last thirty years! Thus our work and reward have gone before us, and more work and reward are given to us daily. Let the Annual Conferences, the Quarterly-meeting Conferences—let the Presiding Elders, Deacons, and Preachers, all feel their dignity, do their duty, and especially guard against every danger and innovation. Alas for us, if ever our excellent constitution and order of things be changed or corrupted! (It is said that a good old Bishop prayed that he might be taken away if Arius were restored; but the heretic himself was taken away.)

I believe that those who would divide the body of Christ will be "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel." Thirty years' labor and experience have taught us something.

Be diligent to see and know how the different charitable contributions are disposed of. Sign no journals of an Annual Conference till every thing is recorded—every thing appears correctly and fairly. Should there be at any time failures in any department, such as you cannot cure nor restore, *appeal to the General Conference*. Be rigidly strict in all things. Examine well those who come as candidates for the ministry. It is ours to plead, protest, and oppose designing men from getting into the ministry. It is the peculiar excellence of our Church, and the Superintendents' glory and stronghold, that the character of every minister among us must undergo a strict examination once a year. Put men into office in whom you can confide. If they betray your trust and confidence, let them do it but once. Of all wickedness, spiritual wickedness is the greatest; and of all deceptions, religious deception is the worst. Beware of men who have a constitutional cast to deception. Let every office, grade, and station among us know his place, keep his place, and do his duty; then you need not fear for the ark of God. The Lord Jesus will take care of and support his own cause.

If we have not men of great talents, we have men of good hearts. Endeavor to obtain and preserve a noble independence of soul—the willing servant of all, but the slave of none. Put full con-

fidence in men who merit your confidence. Never be afraid to trust young men: they are able, and you will find enough willing; to endure the toils and go through the greatest labors; neither are they so likely to fail as old men are.

"The simplicity of gospel truth ill accords with a *farrago* of rites and ceremonies. Nothing could be more unadorned than the primitive worship. A plain man, chosen from among his fellows, in his common garb, stood up to speak, or sat down to read the Scriptures, to as many as chose to assemble in the house appointed. A back-room, and that probably a mean one, or a garret, to be out of the way of observation, was their temple. Hymns sung to Christ, as their God, appeared to the heathens a prominent and striking feature of the Christian worship. The Holy Scriptures were read in portions; and the presbyter, or bishop, or two or three of the congregation who were endued with talents, spoke a word of exhortation to the people agreeably to the scripture which had been read. Prayer from the heart, without a prompter, followed, to which the people replied with a loud and audible *Amen*. He that led the worship prayed from his heart, and out of its abundance. I have no doubt the Lord's Prayer always made a part of their public services. The Supper of the Lord closed the devotions of his day. I think it was as constant as the return of that day, and every member of the Churches as constantly a participant. A friendly feast, or meal, called *agape*, from the love and union

with which they kept it, served at once as an opportunity of ministering an act of charity to the poor, where all distinctions of rich and poor were laid aside, and no man took before others his own supper; but all, with humble equality, acknowledged themselves members of the living head—Christ—and of one another.” (P. 150.)

“Then, also, I apprehend every man produced, according to his ability, weekly what he had laid by for charitable purposes, which formed a fund of oblations under the control of the Church, through the ministration of the bishop, presbyter, and deacon, for all the various purposes of general good, such as purchasing the elements for the Lord’s-supper; the provisions for the table of the *agapæ*; for the necessities for the poor; the support of evangelists; the relief of the persecuted, and for the welfare of such Churches and persons whose indigence called for the help of their richer brethren. As yet, I can perceive no part of this fund appropriated to pay the salaries of any ministers of the sanctuary, unless he came under the title of an itinerant evangelist; and being incapable of providing his own maintenance, and wholly occupied in the gospel-work, was justly entitled, as preaching the gospel, to live by the gospel. I very much doubt if the bishop, or presbyter, and deacons received any thing for their labors of love. I am persuaded they thought their work their best wages.”

“Amidst the flames of persecution kindled with, and the corruptions and errors broached within, the

Church continued to raise her sacred head, encircled with glory, and to enlarge her borders farther and wider. After the departure of the great itinerant evangelists to their rest in glory, and on the increasing extent of the Christian Church in every place, the desirableness of a *stationary president* seems to have introduced a change in the government of several evangelical cities and Churches. The very learned Chancellor King endeavors to prove that in the largest cities there was but one Church and one Bishop. I have already given my reasons for differing from him, and for supposing the necessity of many house-congregations where the body of Christian professors was so great; and as they sought to avoid observation, and to attract, as little as possible, the attention of the rulers, they would not, assuredly, in such immense multitudes, have assembled in one place. That about the beginning of the second century a bishop appears at the head of a presbytery, can hardly be doubted, and the name became appropriate to one, which before all the presbyters had equally borne. Being now no longer under the superintending care of the great apostolic evangelists, who went about everywhere to establish, to preserve the unity of the Church, and be the cementing bond of the whole body, the several presbyters and Churches seem to have chosen one of their own body to supply the precedence these had before exercised. Whether the largest cities, as King argues, formed only one congregation, with many presbyters, or rather, as I think, consisted of many congregations, with pres-

byters in each of them, the whole seems now to have formed one body under a superintendent (or *episcopus*, overseer) chosen by themselves. Every Church exercised discipline over its own members, in which the whole assemblage of the faithful gave their suffrage. Their reverence for their pastors was great; but clerical dominion had, as yet, found no place." (P. 126.)

We have a few more thoughts to add. It is my confirmed opinion that the apostles acted both as bishops and traveling superintendents in planting and watering, ruling and ordering the whole Connection; and that they did not ordain any local bishops, but that they ordained local deacons and elders. I feel satisfied we should do the same. I found my opinion on Acts xiv. 23: "*And when they had ordained them elders in every Church, and had fasted and prayed with them, they commended them to the Lord.*" Titus i. 5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou should set in order things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee." That is, do what Paul has left undone. Mark! it was in the *second* visit that Paul and Barnabas established order: and why was Timothy or Titus sent if elders could ordain elders? And why had the apostles to go or send, if it was not held as the divine right of the apostles to ordain? I shall not unchristian any Church or Churches that have the truth of the gospel and the power of God among them, as I have already said.

The Presbyterian Churches, at the first, should

have established a moderate Episcopacy and apostolic form from whence they came—one from the high steeples of the Church of Rome, and the other from the high steeples of the Church of England. An elective, easy government, and a traveling and local ministry, with a judicious discipline, would have been better than steeples, bells, schools, colleges, and universities, to make men ministers whom the Lord never called. The ninth century appears to have been the time of midnight darkness. The light of the Reformation began to dawn in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Reformers were great men; but such was the state of affairs, that no doubt there was yet much darkness mingled with the light; hence, it might be said, “All heads, and no heads.” And I should be more afraid of a many-headed monster than of a single-headed one.

You know that for four years past I have, with pleasure, resigned to you the presidency of the nine Annual Conferences. This has removed a great burden of care from me, and given me much ease. You have my letters addressed to you on the subject. It may be objected by some that our form of Church-government partakes too much of the government of the nation. It does not partake of its nature; but there are some similitudes of form, but not of nature. The one is civil, the other spiritual, and entirely disunited. Our government being spiritual, one election to office is sufficient during life, unless in cases of debility, a voluntary resignation of the office, corruption in principle, or immorality in practice.

The great diversity of gifts, both among our traveling and local ministry, are happily diffused abroad by our mode of circulation, to the benefit of hundreds and thousands. Many of our local ministers are men of approved abilities, with grace and gifts worthy to fill any pulpit. Many of them travel hundreds of miles in the year; are gladly received, and readily employed to preach by their traveling brethren, and feel themselves at perfect ease, and completely at home on the different circuits and at camp-meetings where they visit, having no fear they will be considered as intruders.

Farther, it may be asked, Is it proper to have no learned men among us? Answer—Men who are well-read I call learned men; and we have men of learning among us, both traveling and local. Where are our young men who are bred to the law? and some are doctors; and many others who are very studious and making great progress in Latin and Greek; and many have competent knowledge of the English language. Particularly, see in the British Connection such men as Doctors Coke and Clarke; a Benson, Creighton, and others. And in many instances, men who profess the least know the most.

A venerable German divine once wrote in Latin to the English doctors; but he had to complain that they answered him in English. But you may say, Would we not derive great advantages from reading the Scriptures in their original tongues, and judging of the correctness of the translations? Undoubtedly; but these advantages are in the

margins of the best editions of the Bible. As to our translation, it is, perhaps, one of the best and most correct upon earth. To attain to a proper knowledge of the etymology of all the words used, even in the Septuagint, I know not how many languages you must know besides the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. If you suggest any thing more, I will maturely consider it.

My dear Bishop! it is the traveling apostolic order and ministry that is found in our very constitution. No man among us can locate without order, or forfeit his official standing. No preacher is stationary more than two years; no Presiding Elder more than four years; and the constitution will remove them; and all are movable at the pleasure of the Superintendent whenever he may find it necessary for the good of the cause. It is the privilege of every traveling minister with us to say, "I am not obliged to serve you another year; I will speak to the Superintendent, who will not impose me on you a second year." We must conclude that all the ancient, imperial, Latin, and Greek Churches were Episcopal from their foundation to this very day, though in a crooked, muddy succession; perhaps all corrupted in ordinances, and many of them in doctrines; and, in too many instances, the vilest of men have filled the most sacred offices in the Church. The Reformed English, Scotch, Danish, Swede, Episcopal Church, have all corrupted their ways before the Lord. Let Presbyterians say and write what they may, as if Episcopacy never existed, it must be granted that in the first, second,

and third centuries many of the Bishops were holy men, who traveled and labored in the ministry very extensively, not unlike their grand pattern, St. Paul, and the other holy apostolical men, of which we have good historical evidence—which is all the evidence that can now be given. To the people of our day we give ocular demonstration; and the generations to come may read our Church-records and Conference-journals, where they shall see what vast tracts of country we traveled over in visiting the nine Conferences annually. As to the doctrines of the Reformation, we have said, in a second reformation they were *the* real gospel. They have been well introduced, and complete forms of Church-government established. Presbyterians and Independents were all formed about the sixteenth century.

Finally, farewell in the Lord!

Yours,

FRANCIS ASBURY.

Lancaster county, State of Pennsylvania, Aug. 5, 1813.

This “Valedictory” needs no explanation nor apology, and is a proper *finale* to the life of its great and good author.

His remains were interred in the family graveyard of Mr. Arnold, at whose house he died; but at the request of the citizens of Baltimore, and by order of the ensuing General Conference, they were disinterred, removed to that city, and deposited in a vault under the pulpit of the Eutaw Street Church, Baltimore. Very properly his honored remains, with those of Bishops Emory and Waugh, have

been transferred to the beautiful Mount Olivet Cemetery, near the city.

Bishop Asbury was born in England, Aug. 20, 1745; entered the ministry at the age of seventeen; came a missionary to America in 1771; was ordained Bishop, Dec. 27, 1784; and died March 31, 1816. He was the apostle of Methodism to America, and a *true scriptural itinerant Bishop*. Two millions of Methodists in America at the present revere his memory, and thousands of millions in ages to come will gratefully claim him as their spiritual ancestor, and the great benefactor of our country and our race. May his successors in the ministry and the Episcopacy imitate his purity, zeal, and fidelity; and the whole American family, however they may differ in other and less important respects, approve themselves as his spiritual children by maintaining the doctrines and discipline which he labored to establish, and imitate the experimental and practical holiness he professed and exemplified!

15*

CHAPTER XIII.

General Conference of 1816—Bishop McKendree's address—George and Roberts elected Bishops—Sketches of them—Bishop McKendree's Journal—The work divided—New York and Kentucky Conferences—Bishop McKendree organizes the Missouri Conference—Bishop Roberts organizes the Mississippi Conference—McKendree and George at South Carolina Conference—Changes made by General Conference—From Middlebury to Tennessee—Norton rejoins him—To Mississippi Conference on horseback—McMahon and wife with him—Mississippi Conference at Midway, 1817—To South Carolina Conference—Griffin with him—Difficulties of traveling—Crossing the Chatahooche—General Gaines—Indian murders—In Sparta—Myers—Conference in Augusta, Georgia—Roberts arrives—They go to Virginia Conference in Norfolk—Dr. Phœbus—Travels alone, and leads a pack-horse—In Tennessee—Visits South-west extensively—Ohio Conference of 1818—Missouri—Troubles at Tennessee Conference—Writer's first acquaintance with him—Starts to Mississippi Conference with Seaton and Edge—The shock—Very much affected—Mississippi Conference—Back to Tennessee—Bishop Roberts's letters—Notes on preachers' qualifications—Dr. Emory—Letters between them—Their subsequent intercourse.

THE second delegated General Conference met in Baltimore, May 1, 1816. Out of one hundred and fifteen preachers elected by the nine Annual Conferences, one hundred and six took their seats in this body. The recent death of the senior Bishop,

so long their revered and faithful leader, cast a gloom over the Conference as well as over the whole Church. Among their first acts was to make arrangements to remove his remains to the city of Baltimore, and to read his Valedictory Address. The address is stated by Dr. Bangs to have been incomplete, being merely the heads of what he would have said more fully if his health had permitted, and was directed to the Conference, and must not be confounded with that to Bishop McKendree contained in the last chapter. In a few days, a vast concourse of the citizens of the city, with clergymen of other denominations, and the members of the General Conference, preceded by Bishop McKendree, followed the corpse of Bishop Asbury from Light Street to the Eutaw Street Church, where, after a funeral-oration by Bishop McKendree, it was deposited as already related. The death of Dr. Coke in 1814, and the loss of Bishop Asbury, had left the Church with only one surviving Bishop, and he was then in a feeble state of health, and suffering from severe pain as well as general debility. Bishop McKendree was, however, able to preside in the organization of the body, and before it proceeded to its regular business, delivered an address "on the general state of the work, and the necessity of adding strength to the Episcopacy." This address, of which Dr. Bangs says he could not find a copy, was as follows :

Baltimore, May 1, 1816.

To the General Conference :

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :—We believe God's

design in raising up the preachers called Methodists in America, was to reform the continent by spreading scriptural holiness over these lands. The end is not fully accomplished; therefore our mission is not out. But there is no reason to apprehend that the plan and means which have been adopted and so successfully pursued heretofore, are not fully calculated to accomplish the desired object. But, alas, our success of late falls far short of what we have had in former days! According to the divine plan, the prosperity of the Church depends very much upon the spirit and conduct of the ministry. It is therefore proper at all times for the General Conference to pay particular attention to the state of the ministry and their charge, to remove hindrances, and supply necessary means. To this end it may not be amiss for your Superintendents to suggest for your consideration subjects which appear to them closely connected with your peace and prosperity.

It is useless to have rules and regulations by which to govern the Church unless they are attended to, and it is ultimately with you, whose prerogative it is to form them, to see and know they are carried into effect. That the executive authority is conferred on the General Superintendents, is true; but it is so fixed in order to constitute a proper medium through which to supply every part of this extensive work with the necessary wisdom and experience as it relates to gospel doctrines and discipline; and at the same time to bring the whole administration under your inspection as General Super-

intendents of the work. Therefore an effective General Superintendency is essentially necessary. It is the center of union and harmony between the several members of the general body, and the only means the General Conference has to carry our economy into complete operation, and perpetuate the Episcopal government and the itinerant plan of preaching the gospel. But such is the manifest weakness of the Superintendency at present, that it cannot fully discharge all the duties connected with this department. You will therefore feel the necessity of affording suitable aid, as you may think proper.

It was the intention of your Superintendents to have visited the Mississippi, conformably to the arrangements of the last General Conference; but the hostile disposition of the Indians, and the situation of the country, in the opinion of judicious brethren, were such as to prevent them in the first instance, and Bishop Asbury's health in the second; so that they have done nothing in the formation of the contemplated Conference. That section of the work, therefore, remains as it was; but those best acquainted with it are of opinion that it is essentially necessary to the prosperity of the work that the Superintendents should visit that section of the country.

It is our misfortune, in some parts of the work, to have a ministry always in its infancy, and sometimes very deficient in numbers in consequence of location; while the hands of those who remain, and nobly refuse to leave the work, are made to hang

down by reason of the weight of family concerns. What can be done to prevent the admission of such into the traveling connection as feel themselves at liberty to depart from it at pleasure, like men of the world, who change their pursuits for their temporal interests? To rescue others from such family afflictions as might be removed consistently with the spirit of the gospel and our principles of government, and at the same time not to impose improper or unnecessary burdens on the Church of God, is both a delicate and difficult undertaking; yet it is presumed to be possible, if wisdom and prudence conduct the business, and would no doubt contribute much to the permanency and prosperity of the work and order established among us. And while making the necessary provision for the needy, it may be very proper you should notice the manner of circulating books among our people, and guard against attempts, should they be made, to divert the course of our charitable institution to the personal interest of individuals, and to convert our worshiping assemblies into places of traffic.

It is with regret that the Superintendents have to advise measures to stimulate the preachers to a more uniform attention to the duties of their station. It is presumable that so much more time than is necessary is taken up in going to and returning from the Annual Conferences, and in leaving their charges for other purposes in the course of the year, that some circuits lose one-fourth of their time, if not more, and thereby suffer an irreparable loss.

It is our professed business "to bring as many sinners as we can to repentance, and with all our power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord." In making full proof of our call to this work, it is expected that we should visit from house to house, as well as preach the word publicly—to instruct the children, visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to enforce vigorously, but calmly, all the rules of the Society. Are these points properly attended to among us?

The management of this important work is with the Superintendents; and it is for the General Conference to know the state of affairs, in order to correct errors, and give tone to the Executive, when their aid is necessary in carrying the plan into complete effect. Therefore the whole is cheerfully submitted to your inspection.

I remain, as ever, your brother and fellow-laborer,
W. McKENDREE.

The Committee on the "Episcopacy," appointed to consider that part of the address which referred to that subject, brought in a report recommending the election of two additional Bishops; and on May 14th, Enoch George, of the Baltimore Conference, and Robert Richford Roberts, of Philadelphia, were duly elected—the former receiving fifty-seven, and the latter fifty-five votes, out of one hundred and six.

Bishop George was a native of Eastern Virginia, about fifty years of age. He was converted under

the ministry of John Easter; began to travel and preach in 1789. After a few years he went, at the call of Bishop Asbury, to the Southern Conference, and labored in South Carolina and Georgia several years. His health failing, he returned to Virginia, and about 1800 entered the Baltimore Conference, where he filled various important appointments and Districts. He was a widower, with four children; low of stature, but stoutly built. His features were grave, and expressive of strong emotions; his eyes, small and deeply seated beneath an overhanging heavy brow, twinkled, or melted into tears, as the sentiments he uttered might demand; and his voice thrilled or softened the hearts of his auditory, as he poured out his soul with a pathos the writer never heard excelled; for he can never forget a sermon the Bishop preached in Tennessee at his first visit to that Conference in 1817. His text was: "And this is the victory that overcometh the world—even our faith." There was something in his manner of address, in the tones of his voice, the subdued yet earnest and fervid spirit of the preacher, that affected the whole audience. He explained faith, and illustrated its victory by Bible incidents, in the most simple and appropriate style, and blended arguments with exhortation and appeals to the understanding with those to the heart, until the entire assembly seemed to be completely under the control of his holy eloquence. There was nothing boisterous in his voice; no remarkable exhibition of intelligence: least of all was there any attempt at oratorical display. He was not a "son of thunder,"

but of yearning pity and holy sympathy. He wept over sinners; tears were constantly welling up in his eyes, and without pausing he would slip a finger behind his spectacles and brush away the blinding tear, to be replaced by another at the very next sentence. Before my imagination, he seemed to be another John who had leaned on the bosom of Jesus, and returned from Patmos, where visions of heavenly brightness and fadeless beauty had entranced his mind and filled his soul with adoring love. I was young, and had just begun to preach. Since then I have heard many impressive sermons from the best preachers of the land: they have instructed, charmed, and thrilled me, but I have never heard a man who so strongly wrought upon my feelings, and kept me bathed in tears from the beginning to the close of his sermon. The image of that man of God, and the scenes of that hour, are still vividly fixed in my memory; and yet, with all his purity, his zeal, and wonderful power over the heart, it cannot be said that he was well adapted to the duties of the Episcopal office. Without professing to have a thorough personal acquaintance with him, the writer must be allowed to say that he was not remarkable for his knowledge of the polity of the Church: his very kindness of heart and love of peace inclined him to make concessions and compromises for the attainment of harmony which might have been very prejudicial to the general interests of the Church if they had been adopted. He was deficient in the methodical arrangement of his plans, and too indifferent to the

enforcement of rules of order, to make a superior presiding officer. In these respects he differed entirely from Bishop McKendree. During a little more than twelve years he continued to perform the duties of his office. He was greatly revered and beloved for his many virtues, and his laborious and useful services. No one ever questioned his piety or integrity. He was deeply pious, and of a most child-like and affectionate heart. He lived a toilsome and suffering life, and died rather suddenly at Staunton, Virginia, August 23, 1828, on his way to the Holston Conference. Short as was the warning, he was found ready and willing to depart; shouting in his last moments, "Glory, glory!—I shall soon be in glory!"

Bishop Roberts was a native of Frederick county, Maryland, and was born in 1778. His parents were in humble circumstances, having a family of thirteen children, of whom he was the ninth. They were moral, and respected for their integrity; and although inclined to the Episcopal Church, were not professors of religion. The literary advantages of the Bishop were therefore quite inconsiderable in early life, although his parents seem to have appreciated the importance of an education, and gave him all the opportunities of mental culture which their moderate means and their locality enabled them to afford him. When he was about eight years of age, they removed from Maryland to Pennsylvania, and settled in a retired valley at the western base of the Alleghany Mountains, in Westmoreland county. Amid the wild grandeur of their

new home, away from the bustle and fashion of the world, he grew to manhood. Under the ministry of the Methodist traveling preachers, he, and his father's family generally, were converted, and joined the Church. Subsequently the family sought a residence in Shenango Valley, in the north-western corner of Pennsylvania, where an almost unbroken and uninhabited forest surrounded them. Soon, however, their backwoods section of country began to be filled up with hardy and industrious pioneers, and there he began his ministry. In 1802 he was admitted on trial in the Baltimore Conference, and appointed to Carlisle Circuit. It was the same year in which John A. Granade, Frederick Stier, Joseph Toy, Wm. Ryland, Thomas L. Douglass, George Dougherty, and Nathan Bangs entered the traveling connection. Alas, all of this list of noble spirits have passed away from earth! But they all died in faith, and are united with the general assembly and Church of the first-born. Mr. Roberts married before he became a preacher, and his wife proved herself worthy of such a man. They never had any children.

At the General Conference of 1808, in Baltimore, he appeared as a member, clad in backwoods style; but such was the impression produced by his preaching, that at the solicitation of many of the most intelligent and prominent members of the Church, shortly after the close of the session, Bishop Asbury directed him to quit his work in the Western backwoods, and take charge of the Baltimore City Station. Thenceforth it is useless

to trace his course; suffice it to say, he was always acceptable and useful, whether in the cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia, or on the Schuylkill District, as Presiding Elder; from which last-mentioned work he was transferred by the vote of the General Conference of 1816 to the Episcopacy. The writer first saw Bishop Roberts at the Tennessee Conference of 1817, held in Franklin, and heard him preach in the court-house on Heb. ii. 3. He was a large man, weighing 220 pounds. His whole person indicated him to be one of nature's noblemen. His features were large, benignant, and intellectual. His head was of an uncommon size; his forehead high and massive; his eyes blue or hazel-colored; his manner of address always easy and graceful; his voice a deep bass, but soft and musical. There was nothing constrained or unnatural in its modulation, but it was an earnest and animated conversational tone. When excited by "thoughts that burn," his majestic frame seemed to expand, his "mind-illumined face" glowed, and his voice would now swell like the notes of a bugle, and anon sink into the low and trembling tones of pity and persuasion; and yet there were no abrupt or startling variations, but only such as harmonized with the theme, the words of the speaker, and the feelings of the audience. The art of oratory he never studied; and yet occasionally he almost reached the highest standard of that noblest of all arts. He practiced the art without knowing it; for nature and grace made him an orator. The writer remembers most distinctly two sermons he

heard him deliver many years apart—the one in Franklin, Tennessee, alluded to already, the other in Huntsville, Alabama. On the former occasion he held an immense audience as if spell-bound for more than an hour, while he portrayed the fearful consequences of neglecting the “great salvation.” In that vast assembly there stood by the side of the writer a friend from Nashville, Mr. John Price, who having sought for mercy for months with deep contrition and many tears, had almost sunk into despair. The writer and other young converts had labored in prayer and exhortation with him a good part of the previous night; the remainder of the night he had spent upon his knees alone in his room. He went with a heavy heart to the court-house to hear the Bishop, having refused all sustenance for many hours. But while the speaker was dwelling upon the greatness of the salvation tendered to penitent sinners on the condition of faith in Christ, my friend stood and listened as if transfixed and charmed. After a short but eventful mental struggle, the tears gushed from his eyes, a faint smile stole over his lately dejected countenance, and presently he sunk down with the unutterable peace of a soul justified by faith. More than thirty years afterward, this friend of my early ministry was taken from a steam-boat descending the Mississippi River, and at midnight was left alone on a wharf-boat at Vicksburg. A drayman carried him to the hotel, which refused to admit him because he had the cholera; and before day, in an old unoccupied house, he breathed his last. The black man who

carried him to that house, and was the only human companion in his last mortal struggle, reported that he died (as he had lived) in the full triumphs of "the great salvation."

The other sermon alluded to was preached by the Bishop in the Presbyterian Church of Huntsville, Alabama, on Sabbath morning of the Conference. The text was, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xix. 6.) It was a glorious sermon—worthy of the man and the occasion, and as worthy of the theme as any I ever heard.

It seems strange to many that men, whose literary advantages have been so limited as Bishop Roberts's, should make such eminently popular and useful preachers. Such persons lose sight of the fact that Mr. Roberts, although only an English scholar, had a most vigorous mind—read and studied much after he entered the ministry; was by nature a graceful and fluent speaker; and that in the itinerancy of the Methodist Church he enjoyed the privilege of graduating in one of the best schools for training young preachers, and making them "able ministers of the New Testament." For surely, if success be a test of ability, they may claim rank with any in the world.

Bishop Roberts was remarkable for modesty, humility, and simple dignity of manners. He was surprised at his own popularity as a preacher, and was humbled rather than elated by the discovery; and his election to the Episcopacy almost overwhelmed him. He always shunned notoriety; and, but for conscience' sake, would have retired to his

humble cottage-home, in the most secluded portion of Indiana, and spent his life unnoticed and unknown. Never have I known a man of a more unaffectedly humble and guileless heart, or one to whom strife and controversy seemed more repugnant. And yet, although so mild and almost apparently timid when a sense of duty to the Church, to truth, or to the character of a brother required it, his firmness and moral courage were equal to any emergency.

He made an excellent Bishop. The only deficiencies under which he labored originated in his size and his sympathies. Owing to his great weight he failed, on many occasions, to reach the Conferences at the proper time; and occasionally, to get to them at all. For, on account of the want of public conveyances, and the condition of the roads, especially in the West and South, he was obliged to travel on horseback; and no horse could be found capable of bearing him through his long tours. Nor were these long rides much less painful to himself.

His sympathies were so strong that he could not always resist their influence, even although his judgment might demur; so that many a truant young preacher received a mild rebuke, who deserved a severe reprimand. He presided over the preachers in Conference like a father among his children; and no Bishop was ever more generally or deeply loved. His long and wearisome journeys, his exposure to every change of weather and climate for so many years, and the never-ending "care of all the Churches," which came upon

him daily, after twenty-seven years of faithful and acceptable service as an itinerant Bishop, broke down his vigorous constitution, and he died in the spring of 1843. His death was peaceful and resigned; his work was done, and he was ready to depart and go to Christ. And rarely has so pure and lovely a spirit passed from earth to heaven. A few of his neighbors were present at his burial, who, having prepared for him a grave on his own little farm, quietly laid him away to rest in one of the most sequestered places in the West.

Subsequently the Indiana Conference consented to the removal of his remains to Greencastle, the seat of the Indiana Asbury University; and within the inclosure of the college-grounds they now repose, awaiting the resurrection of the just.

What a rich legacy has the Methodist family, North and South, in the character and labors of their early Bishops! And while we should never be proud of our *succession*, we have certainly no reason to be ashamed of it. May it ever be so in every branch of our Methodism!

Such were the men who, by the vote of the General Conference, were made joint Superintendents with Bishop McKendree. The field of their labor was also extended by the addition of the Mississippi and Missouri Conferences, making now eleven Conferences.

Although the war between our country and Great Britain had been terminated by the Treaty of Ghent, signed December 24, 1814, yet the effects of that struggle continued to be felt for some years after-

ward. The excitement of the war, and the demoralization which always accompanies it, however, gradually gave way to a more healthy state of public feeling. But it is evident that from 1812 to 1816 the Methodist Church was less successful in increasing her membership and ministry than during any other equal term before or since.

The Journal of Bishop McKendree notices this fact in the following statement:

"In 1812, we had 195,357 members, and 688 traveling preachers. In 1816, there were 211,165 members, and 695 preachers—giving an increase of 15,808 members and but 7 preachers in four years."

He proceeds to say: "At the close of the General Conference, my health was so far recovered as to justify an attempt to resume my labors, especially as there were two Bishops added, who, I expected, would relieve me of a great part of the labor; but neither of them was acquainted with the general state of the Church, nor with the peculiarities and difficulties of the Episcopal duties. It was therefore advised that they should attend the first three Conferences in company, in order to adjust their views and mode of presiding, so that they might administer harmoniously when separated. Bishop Roberts approved of the plan, and went with me."

But, as it was thought to be neither necessary nor advisable for all the Bishops to attend each Annual Conference, they made a division of the work among themselves, "mutually agreeing to attend the Conferences alternately, thus changing their work every year; and for the Bishop, whose turn it

might be to attend a Conference, to be the responsible president of it; and the other Bishops, if present, to be his counselors. And, if they should not find it best to attend as counselors, or assistants, for the time being, they were to employ the intervals in visiting the Churches," etc. Thus was begun the practice of *dividing the work of superintending the Conferences by the Bishops themselves, and also of alternating*—a method which, it is hoped, will be perpetuated as most consistent with the genius of our Church-constitution, and best calculated to promote union and perpetuate the itinerancy.

We quote again from the Bishop's Journal: "The Bishops are personally responsible for their moral conduct; but, as General Superintendents, they are jointly responsible for the administration of the discipline, or for the management of 'the spiritual and temporal business of the Church,'" which is subject to their oversight. Conformably to this view, immediately after the General Conference adjourned, the Bishops met together to arrange their plan of future operations. Bishop George proposed a division of the work into three Districts, each to take his part or lot. To this the senior Bishop objected, and proposed that as two were but just entering upon the important work, they should all go to the New York and New England Conferences, see the state of things, harmonize their views and mode of transacting their official duties, in order to prevent a difference in their administrations when apart. Bishop Roberts acceded to the proposition, but Bishop George had

business which called for his attention; nor could he see it "necessary for three men to go and do one man's work." From the New England Conference Bishop Roberts, according to the plan proposed, was to return by Baltimore, take his family to the western country, and meet his colleagues at the Ohio Conference. From that point they were to commence their general plan of operation. According to this arrangement, there was an ideal division of the work into three parts—the senior Bishop taking the first, Bishop George the second, and Bishop Roberts the third. Each was bound to attend his allotted part; not, however, to the exclusion of the other two, who were at liberty to attend officially, if they could do so, or to visit the Churches as circumstances might direct. Bishop George fell in with the senior Bishop at the Genesee Conference, at Paris, New York, July 17, 1816; thence they traveled together through Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio, to Louisville, Kentucky, the place of the Ohio Conference. Here they met with Bishop Roberts—all in good health, after long journeys in very hot weather.

The Conference began on the 3d of September. It was a very sickly season, and many of the preachers suffered. From this place the Bishops had to separate in order to organize the lately-constituted Missouri and Mississippi Conferences. The senior proposed to attend one, and his junior colleagues the other, with liberty to select which they would attend. But it did not suit Bishop George to attend either of the frontier Conferences. The senior

went to Missouri, and Bishop Roberts to Mississippi, which made it necessary for the former to add to his travel about 1,500 miles, and the latter about 800. William McMahon consented, in Nashville, to accompany Bishop Roberts to Mississippi, but they were both taken sick. Bishop Roberts partially recovered, and, in a very feeble state of health, pursued his journey, accomplished his work, and returned safely.

Bishop George went immediately to Georgia, and improved the time in visiting and preaching to his old acquaintances in those parts, and then accompanied his elder colleague, whose course, according to the general plan, commenced with the South Carolina Conference. By this arrangement, the Mississippi Conference would have fallen to Bishop Roberts the following year, which would have imposed too much riding and absence from his family upon him. To obviate the difficulty, the senior Bishop volunteered to serve it in his stead. "At the South Carolina Conference, held in Columbia, I accordingly fell in with Bishop George, when we had a profitable time with the preachers in Conference, a pleasing account of the work in their respective charges, and an edifying time in the congregations. Bishop George continued with me the remaining Conferences of my work, and then entered upon his own course. But instead of relaxing my labors, I continued with Bishop George to the Conferences in his division of the work, although I had attended them last year with Bishop Roberts."

For the present, leaving these laborious, faithful men to pursue their toilsome round of duty, let us take a concise review of the condition of the Church and the acts of the General Conference. And the first thing which strikes our attention is the absence of asperity and undue excitement, as evinced by the action of the Conference. That there was a difference of opinion, as there always had been, in reference to certain measures of polity, there is no doubt; but perhaps in no General Conference since 1784 had there been more unanimity; so that the changes which were proposed in the important principles and mode of administration of the government were rejected with increased majorities, except in reference to slavery, while the few changes which were made on points of minor importance were evidently beneficial. Let us examine a few of them.

The ratio of representation in the General Conference was altered from five to seven.

The proviso at the close of the Restrictive Rules, which rendered it necessary to obtain "the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences," to enable the General Conference to change any part of the constitution of the Church, was stricken out, and "the concurrent recommendation of three-fourths of all the members of the several Annual Conferences who shall be present and vote on such recommendation," was substituted.

A new clause was inserted in the Discipline, making it the duty of the Bishop to prescribe a course of reading and study to be pursued by candidates for the ministry.

Two new Conferences, as already stated, were added—viz., Missouri and Mississippi.

The annual salary of a traveling preacher was changed, in 1800, from sixty-four to eighty dollars; and in 1816, from eighty to one hundred dollars.

Since 1808, each Annual Conference had been authorized “to make its own rules about buying and selling slaves;” but in 1816, the General Conference resolved that “no slave-holder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter, where the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom.” This was a decided advance.

Of course the vexed question as to the election of Presiding Elders came up at this Conference, as it had done before and continued to do for several subsequent sessions.

“On the 7th of May, Samuel Merwin offered to amend the Discipline respecting the mode of appointing Presiding Elders, so as to read,

“*Ques.* How shall the Presiding Elders be appointed?

“*Ans.* At an early period of each Annual Conference, the Bishop shall nominate a person for each District that is to be supplied; and the Conference, without debate, shall proceed to the choice, the person nominated being absent; and if the person nominated be not chosen according to nomination, the Bishop shall nominate two others, one of whom it shall be the duty of the Conference to choose.

“*Ques.* By whom shall the preachers be appointed to their stations?

“*Ans.* By the Bishop, with the advice and consent of the Presiding Elders.’

“Subsequently, Nathan Bangs offered to amend the first answer by appending the following words to it: ‘And the Presiding Elder so elected and appointed shall remain in office four years, unless sooner dismissed by the mutual consent of the Bishop and the Conference, or unless he be elected to some other office by the General Conference. But no Presiding Elder shall be removed from office during the term of four years, without his consent, unless the reasons for such removal be stated to him in the presence of the Conference, who shall decide without debate on his case.’”*

The whole question was lost by a vote of forty-two to sixty, showing an increased majority against the innovation.

We now resume the Journal of Bishop McKendree, beginning with his tour, in company with Bishop George, to the New England Conference.

“On our way to the New England Conference, at Concord, New Hampshire, which met on the 16th of May, 1817, we traveled two days in full view of the winter snow on the mountains in that State, while the people were planting corn at the foot of the mountain.

“*May 15th.*—We traveled through a fall of snow—the weather being so cold that some of our com-

* Life and Times of Jesse Lee, p. 500.

pany, from the South, had their faces frost-bitten. From Concord we went to the New York Conference, which was held at Middlebury, Vermont, June 3, 1817. From the top of the mountain and highlands in Vermont we saw an abundance of snow on the mountains in Canada. Our Conference was received and treated in a respectful manner by the citizens of Middlebury, and the Lord made the preaching of his word by us a blessing to them. But the Congregational minister manifested stern opposition; however, we had an official invitation to preach and ordain in the Congregational meeting-house—it being the largest in the place. The court, then sitting, adjourned and attended; we had a large congregation.

“In order to redeem my pledge to attend the Mississippi Conference, in Bishop Roberts’s place, I parted with Bishop George at Middlebury. At the head of Lake Champlain we turned a little off the direct road, to view the British fleet which had been captured in the lake by Commodore McDonough, September 11, 1814. We thence urged our way to New York and Philadelphia, visited the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and went across the bay to Baltimore. The excessive fatigue of riding on horseback induced me, while in Philadelphia, to purchase a light dearborn wagon, which met me at this place. After a few days we set out again, and passed through Maryland and Pennsylvania, and crossed the Alleghany to Wheeling, Virginia. Thence, through Ohio and Kentucky, I went to my brother’s, in Sumner county, Tennessee. Here

I met with my beloved friend, James Norton, who, at the South Carolina Conference of 1813, was appointed to travel with me; but Bishop Asbury's aid having failed, I gave up Brother Norton to supply his place. At the General Conference of 1816, Brother Norton was a member, and seeing I was afflicted, offered his services as my traveling companion. The offer was thankfully accepted. We continued together until the fall, and then, to supply the deficiency of a preacher, and by his consent, he was appointed to Fountain Head Circuit. At his quarterly-meeting held for that circuit at Stephenson's Meeting-house, October 4, 1817, he resumed his place as companion in travel.

"As the road we were to take to Mississippi was not adapted to carriages, we sold our little wagon, and procured a pack-horse to carry our provisions through the Indian Nations. We left Fountain Head in good spirits. In Franklin, Tennessee, Brother William McMahan and his wife joined us, on a visit to her father's, Judge Seth Lewis's, in Louisiana. We were blessed with very agreeable company. We traveled through heavy rains, and encountered high waters, not without some apprehension from drunken Indians, but got through safely. Brother McMahan and his wife pursued their way to her father's, and we arrived in good time at Midway, where the Mississippi Conference began November 7, 1817.

"The Conference was a very agreeable one; but the rains having continued, we found the water-courses very high. We set out, however, attended

by Thomas Griffin, who conducted us to Fort Claiborne. The creeks and rivers overflowed; sometimes, for miles, the country was inundated. Ferry-men took us over the streams and through the woods as far as the boats could go, but occasionally we had to swim. Many were our difficulties before we reached Georgia. The most alarming were in crossing a creek in Alabama, and at the Chattahooche River, in the Creek Nation. A preacher from the South Carolina Conference, who came to meet and escort us, arrived at the creek al-luded to in the evening, and finding it impassable, remained near, waiting for the water to subside. We lay in the woods all night, left our camp-fire early, and arrived at the creek about nine o'clock in the morning, and found the water very high and the boat sunk. The ferryman, being stimulated, obtained additional aid, raised, and bailed, and calked the boat, and ventured to cross over to our side. We got the horses on the boat, and off they pushed, rowing and bailing as hard as they could, with the water rising in the boat all the time. Our hopes and fears were nearly balanced. If the boat should sink, we were to swim. But the Bishop could not swim; however, he could hold on to the tail of a horse and let *him* swim. So soon as the boat rested on the other shore, the water poured in at both ends, but men and horses hastened out while it was sinking. The next night we camped with a family moving to the West, who knew us. A hog was killed, and we were comfortably entertained, and had meeting with them. Another

night we camped with a number of families, and preached to them. Our journey was made more pleasant by falling in with a gentleman and his servant, who were returning to Georgia with an empty wagon, for the remainder of his family and property. He generously consented to carry our provision for ourselves and our horses, and our horses as well as ourselves were thereby safe from starvation.

“The Chattahooche is a considerable river where it runs through the Creek Nation. As a compensation, in part, for the privilege of having a road through the Nation from Georgia to Alabama, the United States supplied a good ferry-boat, and fixed a substantial rope across the river; but the late freshet had swept off the boat, and a very indifferent one had been substituted—so light and narrow was it that travelers had to take their wagons over empty, with a wheel on each side in the water. It could carry over but two horses at a time, and they must stand lengthwise in the boat, and keep quiet. Thousands of movers were on the road; and many carriages and wagons were on the east side of the river, awaiting their turn to cross. As we were from the West, we had to wait no longer than the return of the boat. The first boat took in the two preachers—*i. e.*, Bishop McKendree and Brother Norton—and their saddle-horses, one of which was young and restive. After getting out some distance from the shore, by the bad management of a ferryman, the boat began to take in water, the ferry-men became alarmed and let go their hold of the

rope, and we were instantly floating down a deep and very rapid stream, without oars or poles, and with nothing but a hand-spike or two on board. Finding our condition so dangerous, we endeavored to calm the agitation of the black ferrymen, who had been substituted for the regular Indian ferrymen; and encouraged by our composure and the promise of a fee, we at last effected a landing on the same side from which we had started, and about one hundred and fifty yards below; but the feat was made with great difficulty, and at the only point where a landing was practicable. We succeeded in getting the boat back to the starting-place, and were finally put across the river after two hours of danger and detention. The bank was thronged with anxious spectators, who cordially welcomed us upon our safe arrival.

“A part of the Creek Nation was then at war with our people, and killed one of General Jackson’s soldiers upon one of the nights we lay out, and not far from us. We were informed of this fact by General Gaines, whom we met going into the Nation as we were leaving it. But the Lord helped and preserved us; and, after a toilsome and hazardous journey, we safely arrived at our beloved friend and brother, Lucas’s, in Sparta, Georgia.”

Let the reader pause and think of a tour from Vermont to Middle Tennessee; thence, on horseback, through Indian tribes, to Louisiana; thence, amid drenching rains, over swollen streams, and through a hostile band of Indians, to Georgia; and this performed by a man advanced in life and in-

firm in health; and recollect, this is but one of the many similar tours which our Bishops took to carry out our system of itinerant General Superintendency. Such were the men, and such the labors they endured for souls and for Christ's sake.

His Journal proceeds: "At Sparta we were about sixty miles from the place where the Conference was to meet; and, having some spare time before us, I determined to rest and recruit my health and strength, while Brother Norton went to see his mother, after two years' absence. But the good people prevailed on me to be contented to rest the horses, while they took me to popular meetings on the two following Sabbaths. After having given the horses nine days' rest, I set out with Brother Lewis Myers and visited Louisville, about forty miles from the seat of the Conference, Savannah, and Charleston, and arrived at Augusta, Georgia, the day before the Conference began,* making four hundred miles instead of forty. I had now visited the Mississippi Conference for Bishop Roberts, as I promised, intending, after our interview, to return and visit the Churches in Illinois, and be ready to take my course of work, commencing with the Ohio Conference. At the South Carolina Conference we had to manage some of the most delicate and eventful business. Bishop Roberts's assistance was greatly needed, especially as it was his special charge, according to our division of the work. But

* The Minutes show that this Conference was appointed to be held at Louisville, July 27, 1818, but it was held at Augusta.

the distance to the Conference was greater than he expected, and his horse failing, he did not arrive until the fifth day of the session. The important business was adjusted in a way satisfactory to Bishop Roberts; and we were well pleased at the result, which was peace and brotherly love. This was Bishop Roberts's first visit; he knew neither the country nor the people, and therefore was desirous I should accompany him to Norfolk, to hold the Virginia Conference. But as this would add six hundred miles' traveling to my already excessive labors, I was not disposed to do so, and therefore took leave of him, and set out on my westward tour. But, reflecting on his situation—a stranger to the way and the people, his horse with a sore back, and having barely time to get to the Conference—after riding five miles I determined to return and accompany him, if he had not gone. I found him, and he was delighted. We started early next morning for Norfolk, Virginia. Our time on the trip was diligently improved, traveling from thirty to forty-five miles a day: rain did not stop us. Saturday we had our linen washed; Sabbath preached; and thus we pushed on, and got to Norfolk the day before the Conference opened. The back of the Bishop's horse was well, and the preachers and people were glad to see us. Here we unexpectedly met with Bishop George, in good health, with Dr. Phœbus and his family, from New York. The Doctor had been appointed a missionary to New Orleans, and was on his way there. The other Bishops had not been consulted in this ap-

pointment. The Doctor was approved—the size and consequent expense of supporting his family being the only difficulty. It was supposed that a thousand dollars would hardly support him, and he was then without money to bear his traveling expenses. Bishop George requested me to undertake the management of this business, but I declined; loaned the Bishop one hundred dollars, and bound myself to raise five hundred dollars in the West for the support of the mission, if it should be carried into effect, provided my colleagues would raise the balance. Dr. Phœbus was sent back to New York, and the hundred dollars returned. The Conference closed with encouraging prospects, and the preachers parted in love. I parted with my colleagues, and set out for the western country, being about one hundred and fifty miles farther from my object than when I returned to Bishop Roberts, in Georgia. I had the company of preachers from Norfolk to Lynchburg; but from there to Kentucky I traveled alone, leading my pack-horse all the way. About the last of March, or the 1st of April, I arrived safely at my brother's residence, in Sumner county, Tennessee. Having rested a few days, I took a young preacher with me, and resumed my plan of visiting the Churches upon our frontier work. We passed through the south-west corner of Kentucky; crossed the Ohio River at Golconda; passed through the southern part of Illinois; crossed the Mississippi River at Cape Girardeau, visiting the frontier Churches in Missouri, and intending to see the Churches about

Boone's Lick, but sickness and high water induced me to stop with Brother Murphy. After a week's rest, I crossed the Merrimack and Missouri Rivers, and attended a camp-meeting between the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers, where I met Brother Walker, the Presiding Elder. Here we held a profitable camp-meeting, which is the third I have attended since I crossed the Mississippi River. I had the pleasure of meeting many of my friends from the old States, and of seeing the work of the Lord prospering in the new settlements. We then went to St. Louis; crossed the Mississippi; visited the Churches about Turkey Hill, Vincennes, the forks of White River, and the little towns on the way to Jeffersonville. Here we crossed the Ohio to Louisville, Kentucky, where I had sent an appointment for preaching. They had made it a two-days' meeting. I was pleased. The congregation was very large, and the meeting good. The next appointment was in Shelbyville, Kentucky, about thirty miles distant. From there I visited Frankfort, Lexington, and Maysville, in Kentucky, and as many congregations between them as I could. From Maysville I crossed over into Ohio, to West Union, Chillicothe, New Lancaster, Zanesville, Barnesville, Mount Pleasant to Steubenville, August 7, 1818. From Middlebury, June 3, 1817, to this place, I have traveled over a very large tract of country: my rides have been excessively hard; my ministerial services in Conferences, camp and quarterly-meetings, added to visiting the Churches through the Districts and circuits, have been abundant, and I am

now feeling the effects in a manner heretofore unknown to me, and, instead of relaxation, my work is rather more rigorous. Here, according to our division, my course begins, and terminates at the Mississippi Conference.

“The preachers met, and the Ohio Conference commenced its session at Steubenville, August 7, 1818. All the Bishops were present, in health, and bore their part in the labors of the Conference. Joshua Soule, our Book Agent from New York, attended. Our business was conducted in an orderly and proper manner.

“At the close of this Conference, my strength was so exhausted that some of the preachers, especially Bishop Roberts and Brother Soule, objected to my attempting to pursue my plan of Conference visitation, but having lately visited the Missouri Conference extensively, and the preachers having voluntarily changed the seat of their Conference from Mount Zion Meeting-house, in Murphy's settlement, to a meeting-house in the forks of White River, Indiana, which saved several hundred miles riding, I concluded to proceed. I would gladly have accepted a substitute for the Mississippi Conference, but the others were conveniently situated. Bishop Roberts offered his services for the Mississippi Conference, but I thought his long absence from his family was a sufficient reason for me to decline his generous offer.

“I sustained the journey and the business of the Missouri and Tennessee Conferences much better than I expected. At the latter our spirit was

troubled, and harmony interrupted by the conflicting subject of slavery.”

The Tennessee Conference, which began Oct. 1, 1818, in Nashville, marks the time of the writer's acquaintance with Bishop McKendree, and of his admission on trial as a traveling preacher. He had attended the previous session of the Conference in Franklin, and had traveled the Nashville Circuit the past year, under the employment of Thos. L. Douglass, the Presiding Elder of the District—his colleague being Miles Harper. Nashville was then in the circuit, and as the Conference was held in his work, it afforded him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with all the preachers. Bishop McKendree was the only Bishop present, and was greatly admired and loved. The Conference held its session in an office or session-room near the old Presbyterian Church. It was not the custom then to let anybody into the Conference-room except the members. I remember there was “trouble” and want of “harmony” at that session, for as I and many others hung about the premises, we often saw the members come out of the Conference-room with a sad countenance, and when they would meet a confidential friend, a suppressed but earnest and sad conversation would take place, which indicated anxiety and sorrow. No one owning slaves could be admitted unless upon a promise to emancipate them. This was adopted as a rule of action by a large party in the Conference, although it could not always be carried into effect. But in most cases it was. Dr. Gilbert D. Taylor, a man in every

respect eminently worthy, was refused admission because he owned slaves, although he avowed his purpose to set them free—a purpose which he effected by taking them to the State of Pennsylvania, after having in vain memorialized the States of Tennessee and Alabama to allow him to emancipate them. Alas for his slaves! Their freedom was their misfortune.

But let us follow the Bishop. “From this Conference I took John Seaton and Benj. Edge with me for the Mississippi Conference, and set out in good spirits. Being indisposed, and intending to take Carroll’s road, we stopped at the fork to spend the night, but learning we must go seven miles farther, or lie in the woods the next night, we went forward. I became very much exhausted, and a little before we reached the stand *I received a very uncommon shock*. My whole system was affected, and especially my head. I avoided falling from my horse by easing myself off. After resting on the grass awhile, I mounted, and went slowly to the Indian house where I expected to stay all night. From this place we went by short stages to the house of Brother Ford, where the Conference was held. On the first day of the session, October 29, 1818, I presided, but was exceedingly debilitated—owing mainly to my attack, and partly to the error I committed in having blood taken, and using an emetic. The second day, the little Conference of ten members met in my room. I was in bed, but the president *pro tem.* sat near my bedside, and the business of Conference was done properly. It was

a camp-meeting Conference, and on the Sabbath there was preaching on the camp-ground. I was taken in a carriage to the camp-ground, and lay on a bed near the stand during preaching—having been assisted to the place, and supported by two preachers while performing the ordination. I was taken back immediately by my kind and attentive physician to the house of Brother Ford. Monday morning the preachers met, received their appointments, and took an affectionate leave of each other—except Thomas Griffin, John Lane, and Benj. Edge, who waited a few days to see the progress of my complaint. After I had endured the *third shock*, the doctor said I must not move shortly. Seaton went to his circuit, Edge stayed with me, and Brother Lane was to prepare the Minutes, and take them to Conference in South Carolina to Bishop Roberts.

“A few days decided my situation. I could not move. Brother Lane left me, but with one of the kindest families to be found. Every mark of attention was shown me, insomuch I was humbled under a sense of obligation to the whole family. Sister Ford was a mother indeed to me, and her daughters were nursing sisters. A colored lad voluntarily took to nursing me. He would lie by my bed at night, and wake up at the slightest noise, and was in every way the most attentive boy I ever saw. Brother Edge had been sent to a circuit, but left it to attend to me.

“Some time in February I ventured to move, and by short stages reached Colonel Richardson’s;

was comfortably entertained there and at Brother Winans's, and especially at Judge McGehee's. In March, accompanied by Brother Winans, I ventured to visit New Orleans, to see the infant Church or mission there, and returned to my asylum in Wilkinson county. The physician advised his patient to leave that country before summer. For this purpose my esteemed friend, Judge McGehee, presented me with a light Jersey wagon, which was generously stored with provisions; and, accompanied by John Lane and Benj. Edge, I left the State about the middle of April.* I think it was about

*The following note, in the Bishop's own hand-writing, has reference to this period of his life, and evinces his candor and humility. It shows, too, that it is possible to employ our time and talents faithfully and zealously in the work of God, and yet be so oppressed and harassed with the details of Church-business, and the anxieties connected with a highly responsible position in the Church, as to suffer loss in spirituality—so true is it that there is no substitute, not even working for Christ and his Church, which supersedes the absolute necessity of prayer, watchfulness, and daily communion with God through the Holy Comforter: in a word, a daily sense of personal religious fellowship with Christ must be maintained by all preachers and bishops, as well as private Christians, no matter how conscientiously in other respects they may give themselves to his work, in order to have the witness of their acceptance with God. So then we may decline in love and joy in the midst of the hardest labor and greatest sacrifices. Yea, we may give our bodies to be burned, and yet such zeal will not do without love to God. The Bishop says:

“During this affliction, I was brought to examine my life in relation to eternity closer than I had done when in the enjoyment of health. ‘The spiritual and temporal business of the Church’ has become so complicated, spread out over so vast a territory, and involves so many responsible and delicate official

ten days after we entered the Choctaw Nation that we crossed the Tennessee River. The stands were 'few and far between;' and as we traveled too slowly to reach them, we lodged in the woods, stopping as weariness dictated. I think we camped out eight nights, but received no injury from it—indeed, the trip rather improved my health. The weather, however, was favorable, and we reached my brother's in Tennessee safely.

"After resting a few weeks with my brother, I set out with Brother W. McMahon and wife for the Harrodsburg Springs, in Kentucky; lodged with Brother Head, (then a warm friend of ours, but turned against us since;) here I was comforted, and the water benefited me. Assisted from place to place, I visited my old friends, preached at times, attended camp-meetings, and got to the Ohio Con-

acts, that I have been almost constantly mentally employed, and frequently greatly perplexed and distressed in its management. In this examination, relative to the discharge of my duties toward my fellow-creatures, as a man, a Christian minister, and an officer of the Church, I stood approved by my own conscience; but in relation to my Redeemer and Saviour, the result was different. My returns of gratitude and loving obedience bear no proportion to my obligations for redeeming, preserving, and supporting me through the vicissitudes of life from infancy to old age. The coldness of my love to Him 'who first loved me,' and has done so much for me, overwhelmed and confused me; and to complete my unworthy character, I had not only neglected to improve the grace given to the extent of my privilege and duty, but for want of that improvement, had, while abounding in perplexing care and labor, declined from first love and zeal. I was confounded, humbled myself, implored mercy, and renewed my covenant to strive and devote myself unreservedly to the Lord."

ference, in Cincinnati, August 7, 1819. Bishop George arrived in good health, and the preachers were well and in good spirits.

"From the Ohio Conference I returned through Kentucky by slow and short movements to Fountain Head, in Tennessee. There Andrew Monroe, a representative to the ensuing General Conference, came to my assistance, and kindly consented to continue with me on my trip to Baltimore. We arrived in Georgetown, D. C., before the Baltimore Conference adjourned. It began March 8, 1820. The brethren received us with lively expressions of gratitude to God for the preservation of my life." *

We have already seen that Bishop McKendree, while he was ill in Mississippi, sent the Minutes of the Conference by Brother Lane, to meet Bishop Roberts at the South Carolina Conference. Brother

*The Rev. Andrew Monroe, who is still an effective and useful traveling preacher in the Missouri Conference, has kindly furnished an interesting account of this trip of a thousand miles. A part of this contribution is wanting; but we learn the Bishop, although very afflicted and feeble, went on horseback from Tennessee to Lynchburg, where his friends prevailed on him to go the remainder of the route to Georgetown, D. C., in a little carriage. Brother Monroe was delighted and edified with the conversation and example of his suffering and heroic companion, and warmly eulogizes his character as a gentleman, a devout Christian, a wise man, and a model Bishop. The Bishop devotes a few words only to this long and toilsome journey. It is regretted that the narrative of Mr. Monroe cannot be had, as the fragment of it contains some striking illustrations of the Bishop's character and manner of life.

Griffin also wrote to Bishop Roberts, informing him of the extreme prostration of Bishop McKendree. The following letter from Bishop Roberts will be read with interest, not only because of the fraternal love it breathes, but also because very little of the composition of that excellent man has been preserved:

Camden, S. C., Dec. 30, 1818.

DEAR BISHOP MCKENDREE:—With mingled emotions of sorrow and joy I received the information communicated by Brother Griffin's letter—sorrow to hear you are pressed down with a weight of afflictions so that you could not be present at this Conference, and joy to find from the same letter that you are on the recovery. O may the great Head of the Church shortly restore you to health, that you may go in and out before his people for many years!

Our Conference commenced at the time appointed. The members were generally present, and did their business with considerable dispatch. Thirteen were admitted on trial as candidates for the traveling ministry. Three of the number admitted last year were found to be incompetent, and were dropped; one departed this life—namely, Absalom W. Phillips; and fourteen have located. So we have but a partial supply for the present year; but partial as it is, we have thought proper to send one (Alexander Talley) as a missionary to Alabama.

I have just received a letter from Brother Mark Moore, our missionary in New Orleans. He writes me that prospects are flattering. I have put three

hundred and fifty dollars in the hands of Brother Lane, to be applied to the support of that mission. Brother Lane tells me it is likely to be a very expensive one; but we must support it as well as we can. Any money I may collect for it, as I go on to the East, I will place in the hands of the Book Agents, and take a draft for the Presiding Elder of the Natchez District, who, I understand, is one of the committee to superintend the New Orleans Mission.

There were several letters in the post-office here directed to you. I opened them all, and found they were mostly on business relating to the Conference. But three of them were from Ohio—one from David Young, another from James Quinn, and the other from Moses Crume. There is a great work of religion in Brother Crume's District; and in the upper part of the State, with the exception of some parts of Brother Finley's District, all things seem to continue as they were.

There is a good work going on in some parts of the Virginia and Baltimore Conferences.

In this Conference, the increase of whites, last year, does not exceed two hundred; and I think there is a decrease, taking the white and colored together. The Conference was, however, rich in funds, and able to pay off all demands against it.

My sheet is nearly full, and it is now past midnight; so I must close. My health is good, my mind tranquil, and, I trust, my heart fixed to do the will of God.

Yours affectionately,

R. R. ROBERTS.

VOL. I.—17.

Although Bishop McKendree had generously determined to make the tour to the Mississippi Conference, which resulted so disastrously to his health, rather than suffer Bishop Roberts to be so long from his family, yet Bishop Roberts, with equal unselfishness, was willing and ready to undertake it. The following letter was written after the interview between them, in which the senior Bishop had volunteered to do this work, and some time before he had started on his journey:

Steubenville, Ohio, August 11, 1818.

DEAR BISHOP MCKENDREE:—May grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, and every gospel blessing be yours, in time and eternity!

The reason of my troubling you with these few lines, is to let you know that the thought of your going to the Mississippi Conference this fall afflicts my mind. If you say the word, I am still willing to go for you; and if you go yourself, and the journey be too great for you, and any thing disagreeable should occur, these lines will bear me witness that I am not the cause, and keep my conscience and character clear. I remain, as ever, yours in the bonds of the gospel, R. R. ROBERTS.

Surprise has often been expressed at the good judgment manifested by Bishops Asbury and McKendree in the appointment of the preachers to their work; but while we give them credit for great sagacity in discerning the characters of men, and in adapting the workmen to the work, it should

be remembered that they visited the whole work annually, and that consequently they never lost sight of a preacher. The following memorandum found among Bishop McKendree's papers, may serve to explain this matter:

"The characteristics of the persons admitted on trial in the Ohio Conference, A.D. 1818:

"Samuel Adams—Married; a man of talents, though much cannot be expected from him, because of age and family.

"James Smith—Single, young, pious, moderate abilities.

"Charles Elliott—Single, young, good acquired abilities. He is a mathematician, a Greek and Latin scholar, also has a considerable knowledge of Hebrew.

"G. R. Jones—Middle-aged, married, though prepared to travel a length of time—his usefulness promising.

"L. Swormstedt—Single, about nineteen years of age, has more than ordinary abilities, has been genteelly raised, is pious and diligent in his studies. He promises great usefulness.

"A. W. Elliott—Married, aged about thirty years, has a family of seven children, cannot go far from home, has useful abilities—a son of thunder."

The Journal and the letters of Bishop McKendree show the high estimation in which this sagacious and good man held the talents and character of the late Bishop Emory, while he was yet comparatively young and unknown, and the strong mutual attachment which existed between them.

John Emory was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, in 1789. His parents were intelligent, highly respected, and pious. His early indications of unusual mental activity, and of strong convictions of moral obligation, induced his father to give him a collegiate education. Following the wish of his father, and the natural bent of his own mind, he became a student of law in 1805; and he embraced religion the year following. Shortly afterward (in 1807) he was licensed as a local preacher, yet pursued his legal studies, and became a practicing attorney. But in 1810, he resolved to abandon the law and give himself wholly to the work of the itinerant ministry. Providentially, about this time he met with Bishop McKendree, "accompanied him to Virginia, and thence back to the Philadelphia Conference." At this Conference, (the venerable Asbury presiding,) Mr. Emory, then just twenty-one years of age, was received on trial.

It was thus the intimacy and attachment began between Bishop McKendree and Bishop Emory. What a blessing it was that the young Timothy had the privilege of associating with such a Paul in the beginning of his itinerant career! How invaluable to him was such an example of piety, prudence, and fidelity? The impression seems to have been indelible.

In 1817, Mr. Emory was selected by the Bishop as his traveling companion, on a tour of the continent; but, on account of the unwillingness of his charge to give up their pastor, the Bishop consented for him to return, after having had his company

through the Northern and Eastern Conferences. Having been stationed the two preceding years in Washington City, he was elected a delegate to the General Conference of 1820. It will be seen that in this body he dissented from the views of the Bishop and the majority upon the Presiding-elder question; and although, in the general excitement which grew out of the proceedings upon this subject, a degree of coolness occurred between him and his old friend, yet he was appointed unanimously by the Bishops a delegate from the American General Conference to the British Conference. Having acquitted himself most honorably, both to himself and the body he represented, in adjusting the difficulties which had sprung up between these two great divisions of the Wesleyan family in reference to Canada, and having impressed our transatlantic brethren very favorably, he soon returned to the United States, and resumed his labors as a traveling preacher.

The following letter shows the cordial correspondence which was kept up between Mr. Emory and the Bishop, and is in reply to one he had just received from the Bishop. It awakens some pleasant and melancholy reminiscences :

Washington, April 29, 1819.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—Your favor of the 5th of October last, from Nashville, was duly received, and would have been long since answered if I had known where to address you.

It was with much concern that I heard of the

arduous and dangerous journey which you then meditated, notwithstanding your infirmities, the effect of which we were but too sensibly apprised of by your absence from our late Conference. I was not present when Bishop Roberts informed the Conference of the cause of your absence, (not having then arrived,) but he had the goodness, afterward, to show me your letter to him, from which it affords me much satisfaction to learn that you had so far recovered as to be able to ride. That you may be speedily restored and permitted to visit us again, is not only my prayer, but I doubt not of many in this part of your extensive charge.

Our Annual Conference, on the whole, was an agreeable one. The increase in our numbers was said to be about two thousand. In this station (in which I am continued) I think our prospect is still pleasing. The congregation is large, respectable, and seriously attentive, and our numbers have increased from 133 (the number returned by Brother Burch) to over 170 whites, and 48 or 50 colored. Brother Roszel is our Presiding Elder—we being now attached to the Baltimore District; Brother John Davis, in Georgetown; Monroe, at the Navy-yard, and J. Wells in Alexandria.

It will give me much pleasure to hear from you, if you can, at any time, find leisure enough to write me a few lines, if it be only to inform me how and where you are.

My wife, although not personally acquainted with you, yet begs me to assure you of her affectionate regards, of which, I must tell you, she has given a

mother's proof in expressing a particular wish that you should have baptized our little son had you been at our Conference, as was expected. She calls him John; he is now eight weeks old. My Robert, who is a well-grown, hearty boy, is not now with me, but I expect to have him this summer. Pardon me, sir, for this family digression. A stranger might think I was forgetting myself in writing thus to you, but you will not.

We hope for an interest in your prayers, and be assured I remain, as ever, respectfully and affectionately your son in the gospel,

J. EMORY.

P. S. The Baltimore Conference has authorized the publication of Bishop Asbury's Life, if approved of by the committee, of which I have the honor to be one. Dr. Jennings gives us hope of having the manuscript soon. They have also authorized the publication of Bishop Asbury's Journal.

The difference in opinion between the Bishop and Dr. Emory alluded to, as it involved no loss of confidence in each other's integrity, was not permitted to quench their esteem or affection. Its effects were temporary. Upon the first opportunity that presented itself after his return from England, an interview between them took place, in which they interchanged sentiments on the Presiding-elder question. On the next day, Bishop McKendree sent him the following note:

Sharpsburg, July 13, 1822.

DEAR BROTHER:—The friendly conversation which

you introduced yesterday had for its object the perpetuation of that confidence and harmony by which we have been so long united, and was therefore pleasing to me. I am cordially disposed to meet your advances in the accomplishment of so desirable an object. Nothing short of sin gives me so much pain as to see and feel a declension in Christian fellowship. Situated as we are, to understand each other is of vital importance. For this purpose, your attention is invited to the following particulars, in order to know whether I understand you correctly; and if not, I hope you will correct me:

1. I understood you to say, in different parts of our conversation, "It is to be presumed that the General Conference will not knowingly pass an unconstitutional law."

2. "That the Bishops have no right to decide against the decisions of the General Conference: therefore, if all the Bishops believe an act of the General Conference to be unconstitutional, they are bound to submit to the superior judgment of the General Conference, and carry the act or resolution into effect."

3. A decision on the constitutionality of an act, and carrying the resolution into effect, have exclusive reference to the understanding and judgment of the executive—conscience has nothing to do with it.

Are the following sentiments (being those the Bishop had expressed) correct? If not, please to point out the errors:

1. "The executive authority, or the power by which the Bishops are enabled to *oversee* the spiritual and temporal business of our Church, consists in the power of appointing and controlling the preachers, especially the Presiding Elders."

2. The suspended resolutions transfer the power of constituting the Presiding Elders from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, and invest them with executive authority.

A direct and plain answer will oblige your old, sincere, and aggrieved friend, W. McKENDREE.

P. S. The above is intended in perfect accordance with the principles of confidence and brotherly love.

It is a matter of regret that we have not been able to find Dr. Emory's reply to these questions, which was doubtless alike honorable to his head and his heart. We know, however, that without a disavowal on the part of either of them of the sentiments they had entertained, their former intimacy was renewed, and that their mutual esteem continued to the end of their lives. Perhaps the crisis which had then arrived in the history of the Church, and which tested the fealty of her sons, hastened a reünion which had never extended to a loss of esteem. In that struggle which was, even in 1822, already beginning, Dr. Emory, with many others, who had differed with Bishop McKendree and the majority in 1820, was found doing valiant and effective service by the side of the faithful old Bishop in endeavoring to preserve the Church they loved

from the evils of Radicalism. The writer can never forget the effect produced upon the General Conference and an immense number of spectators by the reading of his report, as chairman of the Committee on Lay Representation, at the session of 1828. It was a masterly and overwhelming defense of our economy. Indeed, so clear, so strong, and yet so kind and conciliatory was it, that the Rev. Asa Shinn, one of the leaders of the Reformers, rose immediately after Dr. Emory had closed, and moved its adoption, and the printing of five thousand copies. It is due also to others to say, that many of those who, with Dr. Emory, had favored the adoption of the suspended resolutions, were, like him, found to be faithful and true to the Church in the day of her trial. And, in the language of his biographer—his own worthy and lamented son—"When, in 1832, Bishop McKendree, then rapidly hastening to the termination of his long and honorable career, learned that Mr. Emory had been elected as his colleague in the Episcopate, he sent for him to come to his lodgings; and, as he entered the room, the venerable man, rising to meet him, exclaimed, 'Bishop Emory—*John Emory*—come to my arms!' and, with an affectionate embrace, welcomed him to his new office."

Bishop McKendree did not confound the advocates of the suspended resolutions with Radicals; and it were unjust to do so.

Dr. Emory, although not a member of the General Conference of 1824, was its Secretary, and was elected Book Agent—a post which he filled with

distinguished success until he was made Bishop in 1832.

Although but partially known at the South—having made but one tour of the Southern Conferences—yet such was the high estimate of his character that several literary institutions in this section of the country bear his name, and many a sympathizing heart mourned over his untimely death. Indeed, such was the influence which he seemed likely to obtain over the whole Church, that it has often been said, If Bishop Emory and Dr. Fisk had lived until 1844, the separation of the Church might not then have occurred.

CHAPTER XIV.

General Conference of 1820—Address of Bishop McKendree—Authorized to travel at his discretion—A Bishop to be elected—J. Soule elected—Presiding-elder question—Positions of the Bishops—"Compromise" or "peace measure"—Soule desires leave to decline—McKendree's statement—Facts—Powers of General and Annual Conferences and Bishops—Soule's letter—Bishops confer—Prepare to ordain Soule—The resolutions suspended—Bishop McKendree's appeal to the Annual Conferences—Precedent for it—Soule declines—His reasons—The other Bishops to do the work next four years—Bishop McKendree troubled, but resolves to do what he can—Gets to Tennessee Conference.

THE General Conference which met in Baltimore, May 1, 1820, was composed of eighty-nine delegates from the eleven Annual Conferences, and was a very important session. By the measures it adopted, it gave a new impulse to the educational enterprises of the Church, organized the Missionary Society, established the system of District Conferences for local preachers, and after having for many years left the Annual Conferences to manage the subject of slavery under the General Rule clause as they might severally think best, again resumed the task of legislating for the whole Church upon this subject. But the principal topic of excitement was

the Presiding-elder question, and the consequences growing out of the action of the Conference upon this subject.

The Conference was opened by Bishop McKendree in the usual manner—his colleagues, Bishops George and Roberts, being present. He also gave a written address, stating his views of the condition of the Church, and suggesting such subjects for their consideration as he deemed the interests of the work required. Oral communications were also made by the other Bishops, and they expressed the conviction that in view of the declining health of the senior Bishop, and the great extension of the work, the Episcopacy should be strengthened by the addition of another Bishop. Committees were accordingly appointed to consider and report upon the various important themes of their addresses.

Here we are again reminded that we are indebted to Bishop McKendree for the custom of presenting a written Episcopal quadrennial address to the General Conference, and the reference of the topics contained in it to appropriate committees—a course which is likely to be followed.

The following is the address of Bishop McKendree, a copy of which Dr. Bangs says he regrets he was not able to find, and is perhaps the only copy extant:

To the General Conference, to be held in Baltimore, May, 1820:

DEAR BRETHREN:—Through sore affliction for more than eighteen months, my regular course of traveling and my ministerial labors have been inter-

rupted; but in the deepest bodily distress the Lord has mercifully supported me, and by his graciously supporting hand I am brought to see the opening of another General Conference.

So far as I can judge for myself, the burden which I have been accustomed to bear is too heavy for my present strength, and I can scarcely hope that I shall be able soon, if ever, to do as I have done. I am disposed, however, to do what I can.

It is probable that excessive labor contributed much to my affliction.

Friends foresaw and premonished me of the danger; but I acted under a sense of duty, was supported by a pure intention, and have no cause to reproach myself.

I am deeply sensible of my lack of talents to render the service which so good a cause and the important station to which I am appointed continually require; and I am well prepared to submit to the dispensation, in hope of seeing the mighty task more amply performed.

Many have been my imperfections and errors; and no doubt I should have committed more but for the aid of friends, whose counsel came to the help of the Lord. For well-timed support, as well as for the comforts received from the Lord and his people, I desire to be unfeignedly thankful.

As my labors have been restricted, my knowledge of the state of things in many places must be imperfect. To my worthy colleagues, therefore, whose privilege it has been to travel exten-

sively, I must look to supply the deficiencies of my address.

From 1784 to 1808 the General Conference was composed of all the traveling preachers who had fulfilled the requisite probation. The preachers, who met according to appointment, whether many or few, considered themselves invested with full power to correct, alter, or change the Discipline at pleasure; and our system of government passed the scrutinizing examination of five such Conferences.

The General Conference of 1808, satisfied with the principles and utility of the system, constituted a delegated Conference, and by constitutional restrictions ratified and perpetuated our system of doctrines and discipline, and the rights and privileges of all the preachers and members; in a word, all the essential parts of the system of government. It is presumed that no radical change can be made for the better at present.

An important advantage resulting from the present state of things, is the power which, through the responsibility of the General Superintendents, the General Conference derives, to regulate or correct an improper administration, to enforce the rules, and to carry the whole system of our itinerant ministry into complete effect. This is undoubtedly the dictate of wisdom, and evinces the indispensable necessity of an effective General Superintendency.

The increase, since the last General Conference, according to the Minutes, is 108 traveling preachers,

and 29,759 members—probably in all not less than 3,800 traveling and local preachers, and 240,924 members. And eight of eleven Annual Conferences have produced an increase of 69 traveling preachers, and 16,331 members, for the next return.

But the utility of our ministry and plan of spreading the gospel is not confined to our own Church. Our example and labors have a beneficial influence upon other denominations. It must be admitted that many who were formerly opposed, not only to our traveling ministry and the doctrines which are denominated Methodist doctrines, but also to that experimental and practical religion which is supported by the direct witness of the Spirit, and for which we contend, are now warm advocates for missionary preachers, and speak favorably of virtue and piety, and even imitate us in many things. Thus the propriety of our system is admitted; and in this I do rejoice, and will rejoice.

To what can this astonishing change be attributed with more probability than to the beneficial influence of the example of the Methodist ministry on other denominations?

Whilst we on our part cheerfully follow the laudable activity of many who are engaged in the important work of obtaining the requisite means, and of instructing the ignorant, let us carefully guard against and avoid the destructive doctrine and example of those who stop short of experimental religion, and who content themselves with literary and moral attainments, who have not that faith

which works by love and purifies the heart, and have but a name to live while they are dead.

To you who observe the lives of professors, and the superficial manner in which Christian experience is treated by some, and who try all by that saying, "*By their fruits ye shall know them,*" this will not appear a severe censure.

The influence of the rich, the great, the learned, the powerful, and numerous friends, who have embarked in the defense and circulation of the Bible, in connection with missionaries, to bear the glad tidings to the heathen abroad, and to the destitute at home, at once confounds the opposer, and emboldens the feeble advocate of truth.

When the Church is thus honored, many press into her service, and partake of her advantages, without counting the cost, or partaking of her real joys.

The desirable intimacy which subsists among different denominations, the terms of admitting persons of various education and sentiments, and the danger of being injured by the influence of men—especially of men of the world professing religion—will suggest the propriety of a strict examination of our administration, both as it respects doctrines and discipline, and experimental and practical religion.

It should not be surprising, if among so many preachers and people thus situated, you will find a deficiency in experimental or practical religion, or in the use of the means.

Among so many, should some, for purposes of

profit, or ease, or honor, require, as in days of old, an injurious change in our well-tried and approved system of government, their misguided wishes, it is hoped, will be overruled by your wisdom and prudence, to whose patronage this invaluable treasure is so confidently committed.

“God forbid,” said St. Paul, “that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” Influenced by this principle, we may desire the best gifts, and ought to support profitable offices.

An effective General Superintendency is essentially necessary to our itinerant plan of preaching the gospel. One of your Superintendents is unable to do the work of an effective man; you will therefore see the propriety of strengthening the Episcopacy.

Your attention is called to the rule which at the last General Conference was formed to prevent the distilling of spirituous liquors; and it may be proper for you to examine our relation to the subject of slavery—particularly in reference to the transfer of power to make rules and regulations respecting the buying and selling of slaves.

The regulations which concern the state of our meeting-houses may likewise need your attention.

To perpetuate a living and respectable ministry, both traveling and local, is of the utmost importance. More attention to the qualifications of candidates for the local as well as the traveling minis-

try, by examination before a judicious committee, or by other means, might have a good effect.

The acquisition of territory, the extension of settlements, and the forming of new circuits, may call your attention to the boundary lines of some of the Conferences.

Perhaps we have not paid sufficient attention to the voice of Providence, calling to a more general, as well as a more detached, spread of the gospel among the Indians, and among the destitute of our cities, and of many remote and scattered settlements. The means have always been within our reach, as appears from the success of mite-collections, of town and country missions, and of missionary and Bible societies—all of which are but improvements on Mr. Wesley's system of penny collections for the spread of the gospel. At this moment your attention is emphatically called to this subject by an address from the Wyandotte Indians, requesting us to send missionaries among them, by the wants of thousands of uninstructed souls in the cities, towns, and cottages of our widely-extended country, and by societies already formed with a design to raise money for such purposes.

Our children, who are partially instructed, and the thousands of uninstructed children, who, though not of us, yet are completely within our reach, have an undoubted claim on our attention. Great and wonderful things might be done for the rising generation by a strict, consistent, and persevering attention.

Had we an enlarged and doctrinal catechism, and

were. this duly used to train the children of the Methodists so as to establish them in the religion of their fathers; were proper pains taken to invite the children of those who constitute our congregations to partake of these benefits; were families more diligently sought out by our preachers, class-leaders, and active young men and women, and solicited to unite in the good work of saving their children—by these and such like means as your wisdom under God may devise, the rising generation may be made early to see the danger and vanity of the wealth and splendor of the world, and to appreciate the dignity and happiness of true godliness and intellectual worth. The children of the Methodists would no more withdraw from the good cause of God to lend their influence to support institutions and opinions from which their ancestors thought it their duty to retire; and many who without this care might become the curse of their country, would be raised up to be strong pillars in the house of God.

The Life of Bishop Asbury, which, in consequence of affliction and a press of business, was not proposed to the last General Conference, is now in a state of forwardness, and is recommended to your patronage.

Accept, dear brethren, the affectionate assurance of my love in the gospel, and my fervent prayers for your prosperity and peace.

W. McKENDREE.

The Committee on the Episcopacy brought for-

ward a report pretty early in the session, approving the administration of the Bishops during the past four years, and adding :

“In relation to strengthening the Episcopacy, they have regarded with deep and affectionate concern the declining health and strength of our senior Superintendent. Worn down by long, extensive, and faithful labors in the service of God and the Church, your committee feel a solicitude, which they doubt not is equally felt by the Conference, that every practicable provision may be made for his relief and comfort, hoping, by a prudent relaxation from labor for a time, the Church may yet be blessed with the benefit of his very desirable services and counsel.”

Dr. Bangs adds, “Whereupon the following resolutions were submitted by the committee, and concurred in by the Conference :

“1. That it is the wish and desire of this General Conference that Bishop McKendree, during his afflictions and debility, should travel in such directions, and remain in such places, as he may judge most conducive to his own health and comfort, and that he be accordingly, at the close of the Conference, respectfully and affectionately requested so to do.

“2. That whenever Bishop McKendree shall think himself able, it is the desire of this Conference that he should continue, so far as his health will permit, the exercise of his Episcopal functions and superintending care.

“3. That the committee appointed by the last

General Conference to make provision for the families of the Bishops, are hereby continued; and that the same committee be directed to take into consideration the present state of Bishop McKendree's health, and to provide for defraying any extra expenses which, in their judgment, his afflictions may make requisite.' "

These resolutions, so expressive of sympathy and affectionate esteem, were duly appreciated by the Bishop, and were remembered with grateful feelings in many an hour of subsequent suffering. They were as honorable to the Conference as they were kind and complimentary to him.

This committee farther reported, on the 9th of May, that (in view of the declining health of the senior Bishop, and the increase of travel and labor which would devolve upon the Superintendents) "it is expedient that one additional General Superintendent be elected and ordained at this General Conference"—which was adopted by the Conference. And it was on "Saturday morning, May 13th, moved, etc., that the Conference will now proceed to the election of a General Superintendent. Carried. Resolved, etc., that before we proceed to act on the above resolution, the Conference go to prayer. Carried. Brother Garrettson gave out a few verses of a hymn, and then prayed. The roll was called, to ascertain who was absent, and it appeared that the only one absent was Loring Grant, who was sick. In conducting the election, two persons, viz., S. G. Roszel and D. Ostrander, were appointed to receive the votes. On receiving and

counting the votes, it appeared that there were 88 votes, and that Joshua Soule of this number had 47 votes; Nathan Bangs had 38. There were three scattering votes. Joshua Soule was declared duly elected to the office of Bishop."*

The events which followed almost immediately upon this election were so important in themselves, and so connected with Bishop McKendree's life, that his biographer hopes to be excused for narrating them with more than ordinary minuteness and detail. His authorities for his statements are reliable manuscripts and published documents.

Before the Conference had elected the Bishop, the Presiding-elder question, as it is called, had been, as usual, introduced. From the very organization of the Church, there had always been some members in every General Conference who were desirous of modifying, or taking away altogether, the power of stationing the preachers by the Bishops. Mr. O'Kelly's secession turned, professedly, upon the rejection of his motion, in the General Conference of 1791, to give every preacher an appeal to his Annual Conference from the appointment of the Bishop. In 1800, attempts were made to restrict the power of the Bishops. In 1808, as we have seen, while the constitution of the delegated General Conference was under consideration, an attempt was made to render the office of Presiding Elder elective by the Annual Conferences. At the General Conference of 1812, this question

*Extracts from the Journal.

was brought forward by a member of the New York Conference, and all the delegates from the New York, Philadelphia, and Genesee Conferences voted for it. The majority against it was greatly reduced, being only three—the Southern and Western Conferences having defeated it. “In 1816, the same fate attended a similar motion, although one of the Bishops (George) elected at that Conference was known to be favorable to the proposed change in the mode of selecting the Presiding Elders.”* The plan of 1816 was, that the Bishop should nominate and the Conference elect. If the nominee of the Bishop should be rejected, he was to nominate two others, one of whom the Conference should appoint. Those thus appointed were to remain in office four years, unless dismissed by the mutual consent of the Conference and the Bishop. The Presiding Elders, moreover, were to constitute a Council, to assist the Bishop in stationing the preachers. This was rejected by a vote of 38 ayes and 63 nays.

“Early in the second week of the General Conference of 1820, T. Merritt, of New England, seconded by B. Waugh, of Baltimore, moved so to amend the Discipline that the answer to the first question in Section 5 of Chapter I., ‘By whom are the Presiding Elders to be chosen?’ should read as follows: ‘Ans. By the Conferences.’ After considerable discussion, (twenty-one speaking—thirteen in favor of the motion,) Ezekiel Cooper moved

* Bangs’s History of the M. E. Church, Vol. II., p. 333.

that it lie on the table, to bring forward one that he supposed would be accommodating to both parties; which was, that the Bishops should nominate three times the number of Presiding Elders wanted, out of which number the Conference should choose or elect the number necessary. After considerable debate, a motion was brought forward by Wm. Capers, seconded by N. Bangs, that a committee consisting of three from each side should be appointed, to confer with the Bishops on the subject. This motion prevailed; the committee was appointed—Bishop George then in the chair. On the side of the alteration in the government, Ezekiel Cooper, John Emory, and Nathan Bangs were appointed. On the side of our present form of government, S. G. Roszel, Joshua Wells, and W. Capers were appointed.

“The committee met the Bishops, and after conferring with them, came to no agreement, but appointed to meet next morning. Roszel, Wells, Bangs, and Capers were in time; the others not appearing, nothing was done. When the Conference adjourned, at twelve o'clock, Bishop George desired the committee to meet him in the gallery of the Eutaw Church. We met accordingly. Mr. Cooper, in bringing forward his motion, had observed, it met with his (the Bishop's) approbation, and, if I am not mistaken, said, in fact, it was the Bishop's motion. Mr. Merritt then stated that he held in his hand a note from Bishop George, stating that all hope of an accommodation was at an end. Some on the old side felt their minds afflicted, con-

sidering themselves forsaken by Bishop George. In the gallery, he went into an explanation, which, as it respected the note mentioned by Brother Merritt, appeared different from the views it presented when Merritt mentioned it, but stated he was in favor of the *accommodating plan*, and that he could not see the principle was affected or changed by its adoption. After considerable details, in which Mr. Cooper stated he understood him correctly, and cordially agreed with him, S. G. Roszel observed, after all that was said, he must confess he did not understand him, and wished him to be so minute in detail that he could not be misunderstood, and asked Bishop George, 'Do you mean that if six more Presiding Elders are wanted, you are to nominate three times the number, and the Conference to elect or choose out of that number? or do you mean that you nominate three, and the Conference choose one out of the three nominated, until the number necessary be obtained?' He replied, that was his meaning—*i. e.*, the last-named plan. On that principle the committee united—those members in favor of the old rules having assurances that nothing more would be required. The report was written by John Emory, and signed by all the members, and at the afternoon sitting was brought forward and passed by Conference—61, I think, voting for it.”*

The following is the report mentioned above:

* Extract from a manuscript “Statement of the Proceedings of the General Conference of 1820, by a Member.”

Tuesday, May 19, 3 o'clock.

The Committee appointed to confer with the Bishops on a plan to conciliate the wishes of the brethren on the subject of choosing Presiding Elders, recommend to the Conference the adoption of the following resolutions, to be inserted in their proper place in the Discipline:

Resolved, That whenever, in any Annual Conference, there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of Presiding Elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or the Bishop wishing to remove any Presiding Elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise, the Bishop, or President of the Conference, having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number; out of which the Conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted: provided, that when there are more than one wanted, not more than three at a time shall be nominated, nor more than one at a time shall be elected: provided also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of Presiding Elder in the interval of any Annual Conference, the Bishops shall have authority to fill such vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing Annual Conference.

Resolved, That the Presiding Elders be, and they hereby are, made the advisory council of the Bishop or Bishops, or President of the Conference, in stationing the preachers.

EZEKIEL COOPER,
STEPHEN G. ROSZEL,
N. BANGS,

J. WELLS,
J. EMORY,
WM. CAPERS.

“Great joy was expressed at this union. All now were in fellowship, if words could be taken as evidence. Many in favor of the old rule did not vote for it, and being very uneasy, wished it reconsidered.

“A few days afterward, Bishop McKendree came forward and stated his objections to the rule adopted, and had read in the Conference a letter from Joshua Soule, Bishop elect. To the sentiments of Bishop McKendree and Mr. Soule those in favor of a change took exceptions, held a caucus without consulting those not in favor of the change, and agreed to arrest the ordination of J. Soule. Those originally in favor of the old rule (but who had agreed to the compromise for the sake of peace and union) considered themselves no longer bound by any agreement on accommodating measures. A motion was made to reconsider the vote on the election of Presiding Elders, and while this was under consideration, J. Soule, understanding he was to be publicly opposed, came forward, and by letter asked liberty to resign. The subject of his resignation was taken up, and, at the instance of S. G. Roszel, it was postponed until next morning. On the motion before mentioned, to reconsider, there was a tie vote—43 to 43—Bishop Roberts refusing to give the casting vote.

“A motion was then brought forward to suspend the resolutions, making the Presiding Elders elective until the next General Conference. This motion prevailed—45 for, and 34 against it.

“Brother Soule’s resignation was then taken up,

and 'S. G. Roszel moved that Brother Soule be, and hereby is, respectfully requested to withdraw his resignation, and submit to the wishes of his brethren in being ordained a Bishop.' This prevailed, 49 voting for it. When this was stated by Bishop George to J. Soule, he still stated his wish to resign; upon which James Quinn remarked, 'We cannot accept or receive his resignation;' and *no vote was taken on it*. Permission, therefore, was not given him by vote of the Conference to resign. Of course he stands *Bishop elect*.

"After Brother Soule's wish to resign, Bishop George observed to S. G. Roszel, privately, that the Conference must elect another Bishop, for they could not cover the work, Bishop McKendree not being effective. S. G. Roszel replied that we, the majority, will vote for no one but Brother Soule. Then, said Bishop George, you will compel us to resign. The reply was, We had rather have no Bishop than one we cannot confide in. On Friday before the Conference adjourned, Bishop George observed to S. G. Roszel that Brother Soule would now serve; that he believed many of the minority would vote for him; that he had been talking with Bangs and Hedding. Bishop George then notified the Conference that they must meet next morning and elect a Bishop, and that he could be ordained the Sabbath following. That evening the minority had a meeting, and came to a determination to address Bishops George and Roberts, requesting them to decline having another Bishop appointed. This address Bishop Roberts showed to S. G. Roszel

after the Conference adjourned. On Saturday morning, when the Conference had met, Bishop George stated that, as it was a late period of the session, and the minds of some were much afflicted, they had thought proper to advise not to elect a Bishop at this time, but the majority could do as they thought proper. Brothers Capers and Wells brought forward a motion to elect a Bishop, etc.; but, after some observations made by Bishop George, it was withdrawn. S. G. Roszel renewed it. Bishop George beckoned him to come to him in the altar, and asked him to withdraw it, that the minority would not agree to it, or would break off, or something to that effect. It was withdrawn.”*

The above statement was made for the information of Bishop McKendree, who, as will appear, was unwell and out of the city. The author was not only a member of the Conference, but of the committee who conferred with the Bishops and reported the resolutions, which afterward were known as the suspended resolutions. The reader will readily identify him; and, of course, his statement is reliable. Bishop McKendree filed it away, and kept it very carefully.

We subjoin the following statement from Bishop McKendree's Journal, in reference to these transactions :

“The Superintendents requested the General Conference to give them the assistance of another

* Extract from a manuscript “Statement of the Proceedings of the General Conference of 1820, by a Member.”

Bishop. The request was granted, the Rev. Joshua Soule was elected, and the day of his consecration was fixed by the Bishops, and announced in the Conference. On account of his health, the senior Bishop then went into the country until the time should arrive. After this, the question of transferring the power of appointing the Presiding Elders from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, was taken up and warmly discussed. This would so manifestly effect a radical change in our system of government, that it became pretty evident the motion would be lost; yet the debate was protracted until the time fixed for the consecration was fast approaching. The Bishop elect was known to be in favor of the constitutional system of government. When the senior returned, in expectation of attending to the ordination, he was informed that Bishop George had postponed it, and consequently preparation for the ordination had not been made. At this late hour the Conference appointed a committee to consult with the Bishops on this momentous subject. The Bishop elect was precluded from this consultation by the delicacy of his position. The senior Bishop disapproved of the proposed change; the other two were favorable to some change, the extent not pointed out. At the adjournment of the first session of the Conference on the next day, Bishop George invited the committee, who had waited on the Bishops, consisting of three from each side, to meet him. In this meeting the proposition before the Conference was so changed as to authorize the Bishops, when a

Presiding Elder should be wanted, to nominate three persons, one of whom should be chosen Presiding Elder by the Conference."

When the Conference met again, the long-protracted subject was presented in this new dress as "a compromise"—"a peace-measure;" and with but little, if any examination, was passed.

This decision seriously affected the senior Bishop; forasmuch as he did conscientiously believe that it was a violation of the constitution, that a principle was ceded by virtue of which the members of the Church might be deprived of their constitutional rights, and the itinerant system of government entirely changed contrary to the constitution.

Originally, the itinerant preachers exercised unrestricted powers; but they saw proper, in their wisdom, to constitute a delegated General Conference, invested with such powers as the preachers collectively deemed necessary to perform the duties assigned it. *Their powers were expressed. What is not expressed is, consequently, withheld.* From the same authority the Bishops derive their powers, and the preachers and members their rights and privileges. And by virtue of the same authority, arising out of our compact, the powers and rights of the delegated Conference, the Bishops, the preachers, and the members are secured by "the Limitations and Restrictions"—otherwise called the Constitution of our Church.

By the same authority (*i. e.*, the convention of the preachers in 1808) the Bishops were made amenable to the General Conference for their conduct as Gen-

eral Superintendents for the spiritual and temporal business of the Church. To discharge the duties assigned them, and stand justly amenable as overseers, they are authorized to choose the Presiding Elders, to appoint the preachers to their work, "and, in the intervals of the Conference, to change," etc. But the delegated Conference, by these resolutions, attempted :

1. To divest the Bishops of a power which they held by the same authority which created that body and conferred its powers.

2. To invest the Bishops with power to nominate persons for Presiding Elders.

3. To invest the Annual Conferences with power to elect Presiding Elders—all of which are unknown to our Form of Discipline, to the Constitution of the Church, and to Episcopal Methodism.

It follows, from our view of this subject :

1. That by the same authority by which the Conferences divest the Bishops of the right of choosing the Presiding Elders, they may deprive the preachers and members of their rights of trial and appeal, etc., and of any of their privileges as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

2. As the General Conference assumed the power to give the Bishops the right to nominate, and the Annual Conferences the authority to elect, the Presiding Elders, they might take away what they had conferred, and thereby paralyze the itinerant system.

3. As the Bishops alone are responsible to the General Conference, and as the power to perform

their duties consists mainly in appointing and changing the preachers, this resolution would deprive the General Conference of the power of carrying their own "rules and regulations" into effect, because they could not justly hold the Bishops accountable for the work after having divested them of the power to perform it.

4. It manifestly appeared to be an act of usurped authority, likely to involve a train of alarming consequences.

Under this state of things the senior Bishop drew up the following as his view of the subject, intending, at a suitable time, to read it to the Conference:

Baltimore, May 22, 1820.

To the Bishops and General Conference, now in session :

On Saturday evening I received a copy of the resolution which passed on the 19th instant, which, contrary to the established order of our Church, authorizes the Annual Conference to elect the Presiding Elders, and thereby transfers the executive authority from the General Superintendents to the Annual Conferences, and leaves the Bishops divested of their power to oversee the business under the full responsibility of General Superintendents. I extremely regret that you have, by this measure, reduced me to the painful necessity of pronouncing the resolution *unconstitutional, and therefore destitute of the proper authority of the Church.*

While I am firmly bound, by virtue of my office, to see that all the rules are properly enforced, I am equally bound to prevent the imposition of that

which is not properly rule. Under the influence of this sentiment, and considering the importance of the subject, I enter this *protest*.

If the delegated Conference has a right in one case to impose rules contrary to the constitution which binds hundreds of preachers and thousands of members in Christian fellowship, and on which their own existence and the validity of their acts depend, why may not the same right exist in another? why not in all cases? If the right of infringing the constitution is admitted, what will secure the rights and privileges of preachers and people, together with the friends of the Church? If the constitution cannot protect the executive authority, in vain may the moneyed institution and individual rights call for help from that source.

Believing, as I do, that this resolution is unauthorized by the constitution, and therefore not to be regarded as a rule of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I consider myself under no obligation to enforce or to enjoin it on others to do so.

I present this as the expression of my attachment to the constitution and government of the Church, and of my sincere desire to preserve the rights and privileges of the whole body.

Your worn-down and afflicted friend,

W. McKENDREE.

Shortly before this document was finished, Bishop Roberts entered his room and presented him with a paper from the Bishop elect, addressed to Bishops George and Roberts. Bishop Roberts thought that

the Bishop elect was not disposed to submit to the authority of the General Conference. The other (Bishop McKendree) thought that such a sentiment would form a serious objection to his ordination, but did not think it was expressed in the document nor held by the writer. "It was agreed that Bishop Roberts should see Brother Soule, and report at a meeting of the Bishops to be held next morning. Soule disavowed the sentiment which the letter was supposed to contain, and stated his views on the back of the letter in terms too plain to be misunderstood."

The following is the original letter, and postscript on the back of it, alluded to by Bishop McKendree above:

DEAR BISHOPS:—In consequence of an act of the General Conference, passed this day, in which I conceive the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church is violated, and that Episcopal government which has heretofore distinguished her greatly enervated, by a transfer of executive power from the Episcopacy to the several Annual Conferences, it becomes my duty to notify you, from the imposition of whose hands only I can be qualified for the office of Superintendent, that under the existing state of things *I cannot, consistently with my convictions of propriety and obligation, enter upon the work of an itinerant General Superintendent.*

I was elected under the *constitution and government of the Methodist Episcopal Church* UNIMPAIRED. On no other consideration but that of their *continuance*

would I have consented to be considered a candidate for a relation in which were incorporated such arduous labors and awful responsibilities.

I do not feel myself at liberty to wrest myself from your hands, as the act of the General Conference has placed me in them; but *I solemnly declare, and could appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of my intention, that I cannot act as Superintendent under the rules this day made and established by the General Conference.*

With this open and undisguised declaration before you, your wisdom will dictate the course proper to be pursued.

I ardently desire peace, and if it will lend to promote it, am willing—perfectly willing—that my name should rest in forgetfulness.

I remain, with sentiments of unfeigned affection and esteem, your son and servant in the gospel of Christ,

JOSHUA SOULE.

Baltimore, May 18, 1820.

P. S. At the special request of Bishop McKendree, I hereby certify that in the above statement I mean no more than that I cannot, consistently with my views of propriety and responsibility, administer that part of the government particularly embraced in the act of the General Conference above mentioned.

JOSHUA SOULE.

It is not a little surprising that this document, so characteristic of the author's candor, conscientiousness, and firmness, should have been imagined to indicate disloyalty to the delegated Conference.

Faithful to the constitution, and an honest and manly protest against its violation, is the highest evidence of loyalty to the Church and the constitution. This communication needed no "P. S." It is a *monument* to its author.

We proceed with the narration of the events which followed the presentation of the above communication, as stated in Bishop McKendree's Journal, and, of course, in his own hand-writing:

"The Bishops met early next morning, and the communication was attentively considered. It appeared that the difficulties of the Bishop elect rested entirely upon the question of the constitutionality of the resolutions; and it was proposed for the Bishops to express their opinions on their constitutionality. Bishop Roberts was of the opinion that the resolutions of the Conference were an infringement of the constitution. Bishop George chose to be silent. The senior Bishop considered them unconstitutional. The next question was the propriety of ordaining the Bishop elect under existing circumstances. It was unanimously agreed that he should be ordained. The time was agreed upon, and Bishop George was appointed to prepare the credentials, and to preach the ordination-sermon.* The senior Bishop then suggested the pro-

* That this determination to ordain him was not conditional is positively asserted by Bishop McKendree, and is evident from the fact that all the necessary arrangements were agreed upon for it. Not only was Bishop Roberts to take the chair instead of Bishop George, in order that Bishop George might prepare to preach the ordination-sermon, and to have the credentials got

priety of informing the Conference of the state of things. It was approved, and he was requested to make the communication, and the Bishop elect, having been informed of the design, approved of the course. When the president—Bishop Roberts—had called the attention of the Conference, the senior Bishop laid the case before them. The let-

ready, but the Rev. Thomas Mason left the Conference at the request of the Bishops to attend to the business of having the parchment printed and prepared for the occasion. "He completed the credentials, fixing the date according to the time announced by Bishop McKendree for his consecration, and Bishop George notified the Bishop elect to be ready; and Bishop George certainly would not have done all this if the ordination had been suspended on a condition." Again: "The Conference did not understand the ordination to have any conditional reference to *them*, or that they had any legislative control over it; therefore a protest was contemplated—perhaps prepared—to be presented at the time of the consecration. While these things were going on, Bishops George and Roberts, who were in favor of carrying the resolutions into effect, took J. Soule with them to Bishop McKendree's room, in order, if possible, to prevail on them (*i. e.*, McKendree and Soule) to submit to the authority of the General Conference. The senior Bishop avowed his readiness to submit to the authority of the General Conference, but opposed the want of legitimate authority as his objection to those resolutions; and addressing Bishop Roberts, said, 'You, brother, as well as I, believe these resolutions an infringement of the constitution.' Such an appeal, under such circumstances, laid the Bishops, especially Bishop Roberts, under an imperious obligation, if the statement were erroneous, to have objected to it; but no objection was made. A silent pause ensued. Since this interview, Bishop Roberts has not only said the resolutions are an infringement of the constitution, but that by them 'the principle was ceded'—meaning that they assumed the principle of overriding the constitution by General Conference legislation.

ter of the Bishop elect to the Bishops was read ; the conclusion of the council of the Bishops, and their resolution to ordain Brother Soule, were stated, as well as an intimation of their opinions respecting the constitutional difficulty. The sentiments of the Bishop elect having been prepared, and, with a little modification, having been read, he retired, and the Conference resumed its business. A warm contest ensued. The Bishop elect was attacked in different ways, and sorely pressed ; so much so, that at length he asked leave to decline his ordination. This was objected to, and he was requested to withdraw his petition by a larger majority than that by which he had been elected. However, after a tedious and painful debate, it was announced from the chair that it was accepted ; but that it was accepted by a vote of the Conference, was not ascertained.

“For the General Conference thus to attack the Bishop elect, and for the president to suffer him to be pursued in this way, appeared to the senior Bishop to be very unfair. The Conference, by the vote of a respectable majority, had put him into the hands of the Bishops for ordination. In this situation he certainly had a right to address a letter to the Bishops, and when he was involved in difficulties by a subsequent act of the Conference, he certainly acted an honorable part to inform them of his difficulties prior to his ordination, and thereby put it in their power to guard against future difficulties. For this letter and its contents Brother Soule was accountable to the Bishops, not to the Conference. Had the Bishops judged his

conduct unworthy of the trust confided to him by his election, they would have returned him to the Conference with their objections to his ordination. This would have brought him under the jurisdiction of the Conference, so far as to reconsider and rescind their vote, or confirm it, and order his consecration. But instead of this, after a formal examination of the subject, they (*i. e.*, the Bishops) had admitted his principle, resolved on his ordination, and that nothing might be done in the dark, they previously informed the Conference of their design. The General Conference had a right to take exceptions, but they should have been directed against the Bishops, and not against the Bishop elect, who was not accountable to them for this act, and was then under the protection of the Bishops, who were amenable to the Conference for their official acts. For the Conference to undertake to convince the Bishops of an error in their determination to ordain the Bishop elect under existing circumstances, would have been proper; and as the Bishops had resolved to ordain him, it would have been better for the President to arrest proceedings against Brother Soule, and invited the attack upon themselves.

“Ultimately the business assumed another form. The resolutions which were the occasion of all this trouble were attacked, and finally their operation was suspended for four years.

“The suspension of these resolutions opened the way for another effort to save the constitution, to preserve the peace of the Church, and perpetuate the

itinerant system—objects which, in his estimation, deserve every effort and sacrifice he can make. This was, to lay the constitutionality of these resolutions before the Annual Conferences as the only legitimate and supreme authority to decide in such cases. To this course he was providentially directed by a previous case in our administration. Under a provision in the Discipline, the Bishops formed the Genesee Conference in 1809. In the Virginia Conference there was an objection to this act, being, as it was supposed, unconstitutional. The Bishops submitted the question to the Annual Conferences. They acted upon it as a proper subject of their decision, and confirmed the act of the Bishops. By this act, the Bishops and the Annual Conferences tacitly declared the Annual Conferences to be the proper judges of constitutional questions; and the senior Bishop is fully persuaded that, conformably to the genius of our government, all such cases as cannot be otherwise adjusted ought to be submitted to their decision until otherwise provided for by the same authority on which the present General Conference depends for its existence.

“The senior Bishop, in hope of succeeding in this good work, prepared an address to the Annual Conferences, the object of which was to obtain a decision on the constitutionality of the suspended resolutions. If the decision should be in their favor, they would go into operation as soon as might be; but if against them, he advised the Annual Conferences to give their consent for the ensuing General Conference to introduce them conformably

to the constitution. This he did, not that he considered the change an improvement of the system of government, but because, in his opinion, the advocates of the measure had gone too far peaceably to return without this concession, and that a less efficient plan, properly managed, would answer a better purpose than a more effective one in the midst of confusion and contention."

Having followed the narrative of Bishop McKendree's Journal to a period subsequent to the close of the General Conference, and thereby anticipated the result, let us now return, and follow the proceedings of that body more in detail, and in the regular order of action.

We have seen that J. Soule was elected on the 13th of May; that shortly afterward the discussion was renewed on the Presiding-elder question, resulting, on the 18th, in the adoption of the compromise resolutions presented by the committee; that upon the same day J. Soule addressed a letter to the Bishops, already inserted; and that the Bishops, with the approbation of the Bishop elect, brought the letter and the topics it referred to before the Conference. We have, moreover, seen that the newly-elected Bishop tendered his resignation, and that the Conference declined its acceptance. We now quote an extract of the Journal:

"*Tuesday, May 23, 3 o'clock.*—The following was submitted, signed D. Ostrander, Jas. Smith:

"Whereas, Brother Joshua Soule, Bishop elect, has signified, in his letter to the Episcopacy, (which letter was read in open Conference,) that if he be

ordained Bishop, he will not hold himself bound to be governed by a certain resolution of this General Conference, relative to the nomination and election of Presiding Elders; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That the Bishops be earnestly requested by this Conference to defer or postpone the ordination of the said Brother Joshua Soule until he gives satisfactory explanations to this Conference.

“After some debate, Brother Soule made some remarks.

“Moved and seconded that this resolution be indefinitely postponed.

“Before the question was taken on this motion, the resolution was withdrawn.

“*Wednesday morning*, May 24th.—It was suggested by Brother Reed, that if we go into the ordination of Brother Soule, it was now time we adjourn.* Five minutes before eleven o'clock, Brother Joshua Soule rose and expressed a wish that the General Conference should by vote request the Episcopacy to delay his ordination for some time.

“No order was taken on the subject.

“Bishop George stated that the Episcopacy had deferred the ordination of Brother Joshua Soule to some future period.

“*Thursday morning*, May 25th.—Bishop George informed the Conference that the ordination of Brother J. Soule would take place at twelve o'clock to-day, in this house.

* The ordination was appointed to take place at eleven o'clock A.M., on this day.

"Brother J. Soule presented a communication, in which he stated his resignation of the office of a Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, to which he had been elected."

The course pursued by the Bishop elect was dictated by several considerations.

1. His conviction that the constitution of the Church was infringed by a law which he would be expected to execute.

2. The Bishops themselves were in trouble. All of them had agreed to ordain him, and were anxious that he should submit to it; but there is reason to believe that two of them desired this as a concession to the Conference, and perhaps with the expectation that he would so far yield his scruples as, for the sake of peace, to administer the objectionable law; while the senior Bishop desired his ordination not only because he regarded him as eminently worthy and fit for the office, (as did also his colleagues,) but moreover because he had been lawfully elected, and would resist the unconstitutional aggression which he believed had been made by the compromise resolutions. The resignation was designed in part to harmonize and relieve them.*

3. The Conference was in great trouble. The majority had, for the sake of peace, adopted a measure which, upon reflection, they believed unconstitutional. They harmonized with the man whom they had chosen for their Bishop, and desired his ordination, though they believed he would

* See note on page 422.

not obey the law. Yet they hesitated to repeal the law, for fear of dissensions and strife. The resignation of their Bishop elect was designed to relieve them.

Many of his oldest and most cherished friends opposed his intention to resign. They urged him by his love of the Church—of constitutional Methodism—and by the fact that a respectable majority persisted in demanding his ordination, to submit. Upon the other hand, the office had no charms for him. He had a large young family, from whom he must be almost estranged if he accepted. He delighted in the regular pastoral work of the ministry. But above all, he felt that he could not perform the functions of a General Superintendent under this new law, and honestly believed that, in administering this law, fealty to the delegated General Conference would be treason to the Church. Therefore, to avoid this conflict with the Conference, and an apparently arrogant assumption of power, he felt constrained to reject the counsels and entreaties of his friends, and, by resigning his office, to throw back the responsibility upon the Conference. It is difficult to conceive the mental agony which such a train of circumstances would produce in an intelligent, conscientious, and sensitive mind. The following letter from Joshua Soule to the Bishops, is an apology for his course, and needs no explanation:

Bishops McKendree, George, and Roberts:

DEAR BISHOPS:—The course which I have pur-

sued, in presenting my resignation to the Conference, may savor of disrespect to you, and therefore needs apology.

I spent the night in a sleepless manner, and could not prepare the communications, which I designed to make to you and to the Conference, in time to see you until after Conference hours. Not having the least intimation or idea of the appointment for ordination this morning, my intention was to have seen you together, immediately after the morning session, and to communicate to you first my resignation, and to the Conference at the opening of the afternoon session. But on coming to the Conference, I learned that the ordination was notified for *this morning*; and in order to prevent improper excitement as to the time appointed for ordination, I presented my resignation to the Conference when I did.

I hope you will not pass a severe censure on me until you shall hear the reasons which have led to this measure. Yours most respectfully,

JOSHUA SOULE.

May 25, 1820.

We now resume the extracts from the General Conference Journal.

"*May 25, 3 o'clock.*—At the opening of the Conference, Brother Joshua Soule expressed a wish that the Conference would come to a decision on his letter of resignation, offered this morning.

"Moved and seconded that Brother Joshua Soule

be requested to withdraw his resignation. This motion was withdrawn.

"Moved, etc., that the Conference do not express their decision on the subject before to-morrow morning. Carried.

"*Friday*, May 26, 3 o'clock.—The letter of Brother Soule to the General Conference, in which he tendered his resignation, being called for and read, it was moved and seconded that the Conference accept the resignation. Withdrawn.

"Moved that Brother Soule be, and hereby is, requested to withdraw his resignation, and comply with the wishes of his brethren, in submitting to be ordained—signed S. G. Roszel, S. K. Hodges. Carried—49 ayes.

"Brother Soule, having come into Conference, again stated his purpose to resign. His resignation was accepted."

No formal vote, however, seems to have been taken.

The following letter to Bishop McKendree was written by Joshua Soule about this time, and reveals the writer's mental agony, under the trying circumstances of his position. It was a private and confidential communication, vindicating his resignation against the importunities of his friends and the objections of his opponents. It is like its author.

DEAR BISHOP MCKENDREE:—I cannot doubt *you* will think me sincere when I assure you that the labor of my mind, in the extraordinary situation in which I am placed, has weighed down my spirits,

and, in some measure, broken down that firmness of resolution which dignifies the human character, and of which, I trust, I have not been altogether destitute while I have encountered that portion of adversity which, in the administrations of Providence, has fallen to my lot.

I entered the Methodist Episcopal Church when I was but a child. I have grown up in her bosom, and my attachment to her institutions has increased with my increasing years. My happiness has been ingrafted on her communion, and I have contemplated her apostolic order with admiration and delight. The constitution which secures her government, and guards the *powers* and *privileges* of her ministers and members, I have ever held sacred. To touch it *in any other way than that which is provided in the constitution itself*, awakens my sensibility and gives me indescribable pain. In this state of things the important question is, *How shall I act?* O that wisdom from above might guide my decision!

I was *elected* to the office of a Superintendent when the *constitution* and *government* were *untouched*; but, by an extraordinary train of occurrences, between my election and consecration to office, a law has been passed with special reference to the Episcopacy, which, in my judgment, transfers an important executive prerogative from the Episcopacy to the Annual Conferences, and which law I cannot conscientiously administer, *because* I firmly believe it to be unconstitutional, and therefore doubt my *right* to administer it. If I receive the imposition of hands, under these circumstances, without an open

and honest declaration to the body which elected me, how shall I sustain the character of INTEGRITY? What shall I answer when, in the course of my administration, I am placed at issue with the law? I have seriously reflected on the subject of a *partial* (sectional) visitation of the Conferences. I have attempted to analyze this in relation to our plan of itinerant General Superintendency, and I perceive a dissonance which I cannot harmonize. I apprehend that my path, should I proceed, would inevitably lead me to a point where I should be at issue with my predecessors and seniors in office. I declare to you, my dear sir, that these considerations, connected with the train of consequences which must follow, drink up my spirit and involve me in a torrent of difficulties and responsibilities which that portion of fortitude that Providence has imparted to me is not sufficient to sustain. *If this is weakness, I am weak.*

Had I been ordained previously to the passing of that resolution, my path would have been marked with sunbeams; it is now quite otherwise.

By many I shall be considered an enthusiast, and shall, probably, *sink* in the estimation of all; but my conscious integrity I hope to retain as long as I live. And, rather than practice the *least deception*, I will cheerfully suffer the loss of all I hold dear on earth.

From these considerations, the final decision of my mind (not unaccompanied with prayers and tears) is, that *I cannot receive the imposition of hands without*

a full and undisguised development of my situation to the General Conference.

To every man who spoke to me on the subject, previous to my election, I *unequivocally* declared my *entire* adherence to the *old-established plan*, and that I *stood or fell with the constitution and the government*. I believe no one can say, with a knowledge of my sentiments, that I have *deceived* any man. I have *betrayed* no trust.

I cannot say that I feel no sensibility at the thought of losing the confidence of those friends to whom I have been bound by the most sacred ties for a succession of years; and if I am doomed to sink in *your* estimation, suffer me to entreat you to consider fully the difficulties of my situation, and ascribe to the frailty of human nature that which, I most solemnly assure you, is dictated neither by *perverseness of will nor impurity of motive*. And whatever loss I may sustain in your confidence, permit me to beg that I may *live* in your *prayers*.

JOSHUA SOULE.

The day on which the resignation of the Bishop elect was declared to have been accepted, was marked by another very important act—the suspension, by vote of the General Conference, of the Presiding-elder resolutions. This, of course, created a good deal of excitement. And yet, now that the occasion has passed away, and we are prepared to look more calmly into this matter, who can doubt but that on both sides there was an honest difference of opinion among brethren equally good and

true? Who doubts that Garrettson, Cooper, Bangs, Hedding, Pickering, Emory, and Waugh, and their colleagues, on one side; and Collins, Capers, Andrew, Roszel, Reed, Soule, and their associates, on the other side, were aiming with equal zeal and integrity to promote what they sincerely believed to be the permanent interests of the Church? All but one of them have now gone to the Church triumphant, and have embraced each other as fellow-laborers on earth and heirs of the promises above. Or who can doubt that McKendree, George, and Roberts were alike sincere in their views of Church-polity, however differing as to the means of securing the end at which they with equal purity of motives aimed? That McKendree and Soule were right in their sentiments, the writer believes; but he also believes they were all right at heart.

Upon the resignation of the newly-elected Bishop, the question came up as to the ability of the Bishops to perform the necessary labor of visiting the Conferences and the other duties of General Superintendents for the ensuing four years. All seemed impressed with the conviction they could not do it, and some were anxious to have another election. The minority thought that no one would likely be elected who would give satisfaction to the whole work, and therefore that it was best to postpone the election until the next General Conference.

On the next day—27th of May—a protest was sent to the Bishops against entering into another election, signed by thirty members. The original paper is before the writer, in the hand-writing of Dr.

Bangs, with the signatures attached of many prominent members of the New York, New England, Genesee, and Philadelphia Conferences.

The reasons assigned are the agitations created by the recent election and resignation, and the excitement growing out of the suspension of the Presiding-elder resolutions, producing such a state of feeling as precluded the deliberation necessary to such an act. They suggest that "it would be placing any man in a very hazardous situation to put him, at this time, into the Episcopal chair." They also complain of the majority for the manner in which they secured the suspension of the Presiding-elder resolutions "on yesterday, by obtaining the signatures of said majority;" and that now they are so leagued together that they can and will carry any measure they choose, however obnoxious to the feelings and views of the minority. They therefore say, "We most earnestly wish the present session to come to a close." The fact is, the majority would have voted for no one but Joshua Soule, and as that, under the existing circumstances, would have been afflicting to him, and perhaps add to the unpleasant agitation of the Conference, there was a general inclination to put off the election, if it could be done without too serious detriment to the work. When, therefore, the two effective Superintendents came forward and proposed to undertake the task for the succeeding four years, with only such assistance as the senior Bishop might be able to give them, the proposition was gladly concurred in, and the Conference speedily brought to a

close. On this point Bishop McKendree's Journal says :

“After the termination of this important subject, the Conference hastened to a close, and the members departed for their respective charges, but with very different views relative to our Church-polity, the result of the Conference, and the state of the Episcopacy; and their conflicting views and apprehensions were but too freely disseminated among the people. I left the General Conference under great weakness of body, and deeply concerned for the perpetuation of our government and the prosperity of the Church. I did not think the Bishops could manage the extensive and difficult work they had undertaken. The part which I had acted at this Conference subjected me to animadversion and misrepresentation. The traveling preachers had, in my opinion, pushed their political views too far for an amicable adjustment, without some modification in the executive department. I therefore concluded, instead of regulating my movements for the benefit of my health, as the General Conference had advised, and as my own judgment approved, to continue to travel as extensively as possible, in order to render some assistance to my overburdened colleagues, and to contribute to the pacification of the Church. To reduce the power of the Bishops in stationing the preachers—which was the only avowed subject of controversy at this time—I did not consider to be a wise or profitable regulation, yet was disposed to admit it, provided the change should be made conformably

to the constitution, which was intended to preserve an efficient itinerant Episcopal form of government.

“I am fully persuaded that confidence, peace, and harmony among the preachers and people, and the perpetuity of our itinerant system now in successful operation, very much depend upon the confidence reposed in the delegated General Conference as to their intention to preserve the constitution inviolate, and regard it as their rule of conduct. My opposition to the ‘peace-measure resolutions,’ as they were called, arose from a conviction that they were a violation of the constitution, and contravened a principle destructive of the ‘limitations and restrictions’ imposed on the delegated Conference; and as these restrictions were imposed by the traveling preachers collectively, and from whom the delegated body derived its being and all its powers, I considered them the proper judges of the constitutionality of their acts. Influenced by these views, and a hope of adjusting our difficulties and harmonizing the traveling preachers, an address to the Annual Conferences was drawn up, in which I gave my reasons for believing the suspended resolutions to be unconstitutional; intending, if a majority of the Annual Conferences were of a different opinion, to submit to their judgment as a legal decision, and upon that authority admit, recommend, and act according to the provisions of those resolutions; but in the event that my opinion should be confirmed, to advise the Conferences to recommend their adoption by the

ensuing General Conference, and thereby introduce them conformably to the constitution.

“The address was first presented to those Conferences most inimical to the proposed change, and it was satisfactorily ascertained that seven of the twelve Annual Conferences judged the suspended resolutions unconstitutional; and yet, for peace’ sake, although they were not considered by them an improvement, they authorized the ensuing General Conference, as far as they could do so, to adopt them without alteration. But the five other Conferences, in which the steady friends and most powerful advocates of the proposed change were found, refused to act on the address, and thereby prevented its adoption in a constitutional way, and, of course, set in for another vigorous contest at the next General Conference. In this way my hope of a safe and peaceable adjustment of our difficulties and the prevention of a dangerous probable schism in the Church was frustrated, and the way for the spread of the schism already commenced was made more easy.

“Until that time I had, so far as I know, the confidence and affections of the preachers generally, but after that I had to feel the effects of an astonishing change. Old friends met me with cool indifference, or with retiring, forbidding reserve, and sometimes even with rudeness. My best-intended movements were misconstrued — sometimes converted into faults, or magnified to my disadvantage and to the injury of the cause which we were mutually bound to support. In this furnace of afflic-

tion I discovered my own imperfections as well as those of my brethren—saw wherein I might have acted more wisely and prudently in many cases—and that some of our afflictions might have been prevented and the same end obtained by a course a little different, and therefore better, because less liable to misrepresentation. But the great Head of the Church still presided, and prospered his work in our hands. I still respected my old friends, from whom I was suffering exquisitely for their former friendship and kindness, as well as for their continued disposition to minister to my increasing necessities, and above all, I was humbled under a sense of the grace of God by which I was preserved in this fight of affliction.

“Between the General Conferences of 1820 and 1824, my health was very delicate, and my trials very great; but I pursued my course as well as I could until the fall preceding the General Conference of 1824, when, observing the method adopted by some, and thinking that I could not attend the Annual Conferences without interfering with their measures, or at least seeming to interfere in the election of delegates to the ensuing General Conference, which I deemed derogatory to my station, therefore, notwithstanding the fate of our controversy depended on the representatives to be chosen at the three following Conferences, I committed the cause to God, and went no farther than the Tennessee Conference. Great were the efforts to secure a majority in favor of the suspended resolutions, but they proved unsuccessful.”

The course pursued by Bishop McKendree throughout this very unpleasant controversy was characterized by great discrimination, deep devotion to the interests of the Church, and a moral heroism rarely equaled. His position was a very delicate one, inasmuch as in opposing the measures under consideration, he seemed to be advocating the prerogatives of his own office, and thus his opposition might be construed into a selfish and ambitious principle. Yet nothing was more foreign from the truth. He believed—and his conviction was deep and abiding—that the change contended for was subversive of the constitution, and might be made the precedent for a most fearful train of revolutionary measures. He could not—durst not—yield to them.

CHAPTER XV.

Bishop McKendree's appeal to the Annual Conferences as to the suspended resolutions—The Southern and Western Conferences consent—Five others reject it—It fails—By whom, and why—Wesleyan Repository—Mutual Rights—Methodist Protestant Church—Journal resumed—Henry Smith's narrative—Visits extensively—Preaches at camp-meeting—He goes South—South Carolina Conference—J. Soule's letters—Dr. Capers's letter—His character and influence—His second letter—The era of missions—Cherokee and Choctaw—Missions to slaves—Bible and Sunday-school Societies.

THE following is the address of Bishop McKendree to the Annual Conferences in relation to the suspended resolutions referred to in the last chapter. It exhibits the character of his mind—clear, logical, and analytical—and is a triumphant vindication of his ecclesiastical politics, as well as of his unwavering opposition to the changes involved in these resolutions. It well deserves a careful and repeated perusal; for although the occasion which called it forth has passed away we trust for ever, so that few if any are now found, even in the North where they were most popular, to advocate their introduction into the polity of the Church—the South continuing, as she has ever been, true to the constitution—yet, to prevent the recurrence of similar scenes,

it is important that our Church-government should be studied and understood; and it is believed that no single document which has ever been published upon this subject presents such a clear, concise, and powerful array of arguments against the innovations alluded to as does this address. Its effect was most decidedly conservative. Multitudes of preachers and members who were likely to be misled by the popular clamor against Episcopal power, were brought to see the tendency and anticipate the result of this "peace-measure;" and many of the excellent and pure-minded men who had advocated it, lived to appreciate the motives and honor the noble old Bishop who so bravely and yet so meekly withstood it.

To the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, commencing with the Ohio Conference, to be held in Lebanon, September 6, 1821.

DEAR BRETHREN:—Forasmuch as a considerable branch of the Church of Christ is committed to our care, so as to involve us in high responsibility both to God and man, I am induced by the present state of a long-protracted controversy, respecting the *powers* of our General Superintendents, to lay the subject fully before you, hoping you will direct it to a proper conclusion.

For a number of years a respectable minority in our General Conference have been endeavoring to divest the Bishops of the power of choosing the Presiding Elders, and of stationing the preachers. They wish to change our present form of govern-

ment so as to invest the Annual Conferences with the power of choosing the Presiding Elders, instead of their being appointed by the Bishops, and then to transfer the power of stationing the preachers from the Bishops to the Presiding Elders. But this change, in the opinion of your Superintendent, would radically affect our system of government in several ways.

1. It would effectually transfer the executive authority from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, and thereby do away that form of Episcopacy and itinerant General Superintendency which is recognized in our Form of Discipline, and confirmed in the third Article of the Constitution.

2. By doing away the present effective General Superintendency, our itinerant plan of preaching the gospel would be greatly injured, if not entirely destroyed.

3. In point of law, it would effectually divest the members of our Church of all constitutional security for their rights, and reduce them to the necessity of depending entirely on the wisdom and goodness of the General Conference for those inestimable blessings.

That the proposed change would effectually transfer the executive authority from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, and thereby do away that form of Episcopacy, with the itinerant General Superintendency, which is recognized in our Form of Discipline, and confirmed in the third Article of the Constitution, will appear from a due attention to our Form of Discipline. According to our

system of government, it is the duty of the Bishops "to travel through the Connection at large, to *oversee* the spiritual and temporal business of the Church." But to oversee, or superintend, implies power to overrule, or manage business officially. In order, therefore, to qualify the Bishops to oversee the important business committed to their charge, and to carry our system of rules into complete effect, they are authorized "to preside in the Conferences;" "to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits;" "to form Districts, and choose the Presiding Elders; and, in the intervals of the Conferences, to change, receive, and suspend preachers, as necessity may require and the Discipline directs." And, in order to secure a faithful performance of their duty, and, at the same time, guard against an abuse of power, the Bishops are obliged to act in strict conformity to rules formed by the preachers, over whom their authority is exercised, to whom they are amenable for their administration, and by whom they may be expelled for improper conduct.

In the appointment of preachers, those who are to have charge of circuits, Districts, etc., are selected, and, by virtue of their appointment, are invested with full power to discharge the duties of their respective stations; and, in case they should neglect or refuse to do their duty, as pointed out in the Discipline, it becomes the duty of the General Superintendent (after suitable admonition) to remove such from office, and supply their places with others, who will attend to the duties assigned them.

By employing preachers in the intervals of the Conferences, and making such changes from District to District, and from Conference to Conference, as the situation of our work may require, the General Superintendents are enabled so to enlarge the field of missionary labors that the blessings of the gospel of Christ may be carried to the destitute, wherever they may be found—especially to the poor. In this way uniformity in the administration may be preserved throughout the Conferences, errors in the administration corrected, and the rules and regulations of the General Conference carried into effect; while the whole administration, even from the very extremities of the work, through the responsibility of the General Superintendents, is brought under the inspection and control of the General Conference. Thus qualified for their work, it is the Bishops' reasonable duty to travel through the Connection at large; "to *oversee* the spiritual and temporal business of the Church;" and it is equally reasonable and just that they should be responsible to the General Conference for the faithful performance or discharge of the duties of their Episcopal office.

From this view of our government, it evidently follows that the executive authority, or the power by which the Bishops are enabled "to *oversee* the business of the Church," consists in the power of appointing and controlling the preachers, and especially the Presiding Elders, because they are authorized to exercise all the powers of General Superintendents in the bounds of their respective

Districts, except that of ordination; and might, but for their being subject to the control of the Bishops, so counteract and render the General Superintendency useless and nugatory, as effectually "to do away that Episcopacy and itinerant General Superintendency recognized in our Discipline, and confirmed by the third Article of the Constitution." The Presiding Elders, at present, are under obligations to attend to the instructions of the General Superintendents; but, were the proposed change adopted, they would then be under obligations to follow the instructions of the Annual Conferences; consequently, the Bishops would have no more control over them than the Annual Conferences have under the present regulations; and there would be no propriety in requiring the Bishops to travel through the Connection at large (say six thousand miles) annually, "to *oversee* the business of the Church;" nor could they justly be responsible for the administration while thus deprived of official control; for, although they might travel through the Connection and see abuses, the instructions of different Conferences clashing, their Presiding Elders administering differently, and coming in contact with each other in the execution of discipline, their interference would be unofficial and of no effect. Therefore, the change under consideration would completely destroy the plan of our General Superintendency.

2. By doing away the present General Superintendency, our itinerant plan of preaching the gospel would be greatly injured, if not entirely destroyed.

That the itinerant plan of preaching the gospel may be differently modified, and still succeed, under different circumstances, is freely admitted. Could all our traveling preachers attend one Annual Conference, to account for their administration, and receive their appointments and instructions, the itinerant plan might go on and prosper in America as it does in England, without either General Conference or General Superintendency. But our situation is widely different from theirs. Our work extends over more than twenty States, and has to encounter difficulties arising from the civil regulations of different State and Territorial governments. We are divided into twelve Annual Conferences. These are all equal in power, and independent of each other, no one having power to impose laws on another. The jurisdiction of each Annual Conference is restricted to its own bounds, and each Presiding Elder to his own District. Out of this state of things arises the necessity of a General Conference to make rules or laws for the united Annual Conferences, and of a General Superintendency to enforce those rules; to preserve a uniform administration of discipline; to preserve the union of the several Annual Conferences; and by removing preachers from District to District, and from Conference to Conference, (which no Annual Conference nor Presiding Elder can do,) perpetuate and extend missionary labors for the benefit of increasing thousands, who look unto us as teachers sent of God. Such is our situation in this country that our itinerant system can no more do without an ef-

fective General Superintendency, sufficiently under the control of the General Conference, than they can without the General Conference itself. It was, therefore, ratified by the constitution, after twenty-four years' experience in proof of its utility and necessity. Forasmuch, then, as the harmony of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the success of our itinerant system depend so much on an effective General Superintendency, it cannot be done away without greatly injuring, if not entirely destroying, our itinerant plan of preaching the gospel.

3. In point of *law*, it would effectually divest the members of our Church of all constitutional security for their *rights*, and reduce them to the necessity of depending altogether on the wisdom and goodness of the General Conference for those inestimable blessings.

Before the constitution was formed, the General Conference possessed unlimited powers, and made such changes in the Form of Discipline as they saw proper. Out of such a state of things the judicious apprehended serious consequences might arise. The preachers, therefore, composing the General Conference in 1808, in full possession of all the powers of the Conference of 1784, (which organized the Church,) proceeded to constitute and organize the delegated General Conference, and invested it with full powers to make rules and regulations for our Church, under certain limitations and restrictions. Those restrictions forbid their changing our Articles of Religion, erecting new standards of doctrine, or changing our form of government, so as to

deprive the preachers or members of their privileges, or appropriating the funds of the Church contrary to the will of their constituents. The third Article in the Constitution says: "They (the delegated General Conference) shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away Episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency;" and they very judiciously secured to the Annual Conferences, jointly, the right of recommending any alteration that might be judged proper in any of the aforesaid restrictions. These restrictions being all equally binding, if the delegated General Conference may infringe, or set aside one part, why not another? Yea, why not all? For it requires no more power to change our Articles of Religion, erect new standards of doctrine, and do away the rights of preachers and members, than to do away our General Superintendency; and, if the delegated General Conference is not bound by these restrictions, then their power is undefined and unlimited—they may make what changes they please, and there can be no legal redress—no constitutional guarantee for our rights and privileges. Your Superintendent most cordially disapproves of such a state of things, and will do nothing which he believes will produce it, because he conceives it would go to deprive both preachers and members of *constitutional security*, and reduce them to the necessity of relying solely on the General Conference for all their rights and privileges. Before the constitution was formed, the powers of the General Conference being un-

defined and unlimited, and our Form of Discipline subject to any alterations and amendments thought to be necessary, each succeeding General Conference, for upward of twenty years after the Church was organized, made such amendments in the system of government as to them appeared most for the glory of God and the benefit of the people; and during those days your Superintendent (as well as others) felt himself at liberty to propose and defend such alterations as were judged profitable and expedient; but, since the powers of the General Conference were restricted, and rights defined and secured to members of the Church by the formation of a constitution, your Superintendent has both thought and acted very differently. Since that memorable era in Methodism, your Superintendent conceives the General Conference to be bound as sacredly to observe all those restrictions, (as the laws by which their proceedings are to be tested,) as each member of the Church is *bound* to *submit* to the examination of his conduct, according to the legitimate rules enacted by said Conference, because the restrictions arise from the same *source*, and are supported by the same authority, which gave existence to the delegated General Conference, and validity to their rules and regulations; consequently, they must both stand or fall together. From these remarks, it is very evident that the General Conference have no right to make such innovations in our system of government, regardless of the steps pointed out by the provisionary clause in the sixth Article of our Constitution.

At the last General Conference, the long-protracted controversy, concerning the power of the Superintendents, came to an eventful crisis. In all probability, however, the matter would have ended as formerly, had not what was thought an accommodating plan been introduced, which produced the following resolutions :

“Whenever, in any Annual Conference, there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of Presiding Elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or the Bishop wishing to remove any Presiding Elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise, the Bishop, or President of the Conference, having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the Conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted: provided, when there is more than one wanted, not more than three at a time shall be nominated, nor more than one at a time elected: provided, also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of Presiding Elder, in the interval of any Annual Conference, the Bishops shall have authority to fill the said vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing Annual Conference.

2. “That the Presiding Elders be, and hereby are, made the advisory council of the Bishops, or President of the Conference, in stationing the preachers.”

Could your Superintendent have subscribed to these resolutions as constitutional, he might, in all probability, have enlisted in his favor the feelings

of many whom he highly esteems, and participated in the general pleasure. But this he could not do consistently with a good conscience. In his judgment, the delegated General Conference have no authority to make such changes in our system of government, unless the previous steps be taken, as pointed out in the sixth Article of our Constitution. It is very evident that the above resolutions contemplate taking the authority of appointing the Presiding Elders from the Episcopacy, at least so far as to leave nothing but a simple nomination. But if the General Conference possess the right to go thus far, certainly they may, on the same principle, take away the power, or *privilege*, if you please, to nominate likewise, and thereby introduce Presiding Elders, independently of the Bishops' appointment, nomination, or control, and, in the issue, entirely destroy our itinerant Episcopal form of government, as has already been shown. Moreover, if the General Conference may deprive the Bishops of one part of their official powers, in defiance of the constitution, why may they not of another? why not of all? The authority that can take away one part of the executive power from the Bishops, may take away another, until they do away Episcopacy, and destroy the plan of our itinerant General Superintendency entirely; and the same power and authority that can effect this, may effect whatever change they please, both in doctrine and discipline. The subject involves the most serious consequences. It does not turn so much on the *utility* or *inutility* of the change proposed as

on the *constitutionality* thereof, because on this point all our rights as preachers and members depend. With this view of the subject, your Superintendent could not submit his delegated powers to the General Conference without being chargeable with a breach of trust; nor can he conceive how they can legally deprive him of that power, without first attending to the steps pointed out in our constitution. He thinks it would be a *precedent* which would subject the government to perpetual changes, and thereby render the security for the rights and privileges of preachers and members very precarious and uncertain. Your Superintendent, therefore, informed the General Conference that, in his judgment, the resolutions were unconstitutional, and consequently did not feel himself at liberty to carry them into effect. He pointed out some of the consequences of infringing on constitutional rights; and to avoid such consequences, advised (if the change must take place) that it should be done according to the provision in the constitution; or, as the last resort, he intimated an appeal to the Annual Conferences. This was a painful task, especially as it was performed in a state of great bodily debility; and nothing but a deep sense of duty and obligation to maintain and preserve inviolate (as far as he could) that system of government which in trust was committed to him as General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in which both preachers and members are so deeply interested, could have induced him to venture the attempt.

But as many of the preachers who voted in favor

of the above-mentioned resolutions at the last General Conference, saw they had exceeded the bounds of the restrictions under which they acted, they suspended the operation of the resolutions for four years. Hence, your Superintendent is enabled to lay the subject before you clear of embarrassments, with which it otherwise must have been encumbered. And, although your Superintendent, for reasons already assigned, could not submit or give up the powers he possessed, as General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to the disposal of your representatives, in the last General Conference assembled, he will most cheerfully resign them, whenever they are constitutionally authorized to receive and dispose of them, in conformity to your instructions. From the preachers *collectively* both the General Conference and General Superintendents derive their powers; and to the Annual Conferences, jointly, is reserved the power of recommending a change in our constitution. To you, therefore, your Superintendent not only submits the case, but he would advise you to adopt such measures as you in your judgment may deem most prudent, by which to recognize the adoption of the change proposed in the resolutions, conformably to the provision in the sixth Article of the Constitution. Not that he believes the change would be an improvement of our system of government, or that it would fully answer the expectations of its advocates, but as an accommodating measure, on the utility of which men equally wise and good may, in some degree,

differ in opinion. Your Superintendent is, therefore, disposed to submit his opinion for the harmony of the body, as far as is consistent with his duty and obligations to the Church. And, as a majority of more than two-thirds of the last General Conference, after having received assurances that it would be satisfactory, and put the controverted subject to rest, voted in favor of the resolutions, they tacitly say, all things considered, the change is at least prudentially necessary. To this decision all due deference is paid. In the opinion of your Superintendent, no sacrifice for peace and harmony, which can be made consistently with the constitution and preservation of our general itinerant plan of preaching the gospel, is too great. With your recommendation and instructions, your representatives in General Conference may act as they may judge most for the glory of God and the good of his Church. Thus introduced, the case would commend and establish the constitution, and form an effectual barrier against any future infringement of that bulwark of our rights and liberties. This advice flows neither from the fear of frowns nor a desire of ease, honor, or profit. Let me be any thing or nothing in these respects, so the work of the Lord may prosper. The peace and prosperity of the Church of God are the objects of my pursuit. For these I have labored; for these I pray; and in this cause am willing to suffer. Could I contribute to this important end, live to see it permanently established, and then be permitted to rest in peace, my desire on earth would be accomplished. My

work is almost done; the time of my departure is fast approaching, when I shall resign the whole of my charge into the hands of the great Head of the Church, under whose authority I act as your servant.

WILLIAM MCKENDREE.

The result of this appeal to the Annual Conferences we have already seen. Seven out of twelve of them declared the resolutions unconstitutional, but, for the attainment of peace, and in compliance with the wishes of the senior Bishop, gave their consent for their introduction, conformably with the constitution, at the next General Conference. These were the Southern and Western Conferences, which had always stood firmly opposed to all innovations. It was a magnanimous surrender of preference for the sake of harmony; but it was a dangerous concession, and proved unavailing, although well intended. The other five Conferences refused to accept the change as a constitutional measure, because they were unwilling to acknowledge the want of power in the General Conference to effect it. They laid the address upon the table, and there let it lie—virtually refused to act on it, and thus tacitly avowed their determination to carry the change into effect, independently of the constitutional scruples of the Bishops and other Conferences. Great exertions were made to effect this purpose. Many hard things were said and written against the senior Bishop—that “he would not submit to the authority of the General Conference,” “that he acted independently of the other Bishops,” etc., etc.

Against such accusations he could not condescend to make a public and formal defense of himself. His uniform and faithful administration of the laws and regulations of the General Conference, the absence of all personal and private motives to act contumaciously, and his life, now almost exhausted in the laborious and consistent discharge of the duties of his ministerial and Episcopal offices, were their satisfactory refutation. He enjoyed that which is far preferable to applause or to success—the consciousness of deserving them. His own heart and conscience bore evidence to his integrity, and he could with humble confidence appeal to his great Master in proof of the fact that not for himself, but for the sake of the Church, he had taken his course. To those acquainted with the peculiar sensitiveness of the Bishop, it would be needless to say that the temporary alienation of many old friends, and the attacks upon his character and the government of the Church, which this controversy was the occasion of producing, were to him exceedingly painful. The most mortifying circumstance in this affair was, that his motives were impugned, and the Discipline denounced as “antirepublican,” “popish,” etc. And yet, while he could not, under any array of circumstances, succumb to what he regarded as a palpable violation of the constitution which he had pledged his solemn vow to sustain, he did so far try to conciliate the advocates of the measure as to seek and advise its incorporation into the laws of the Church upon *constitutional* principles. Under the circumstances, this may have been

best; and, as it turned out, doubtless it was politic and practically harmless; but, occupying the standpoint we do in the history of the Church, we are compelled to confess our opinion that he owed it to his clear, strong conviction of the impolicy and highly injurious tendency of the change in the organic laws of the Church, to have stood firmly and uncompromisingly against the whole of it, from first to last. And yet there were several considerations which palliate, if they do not fully justify, his course. The excitement growing out of the long-continued agitation of the question, and especially out of the position which the Bishop elect and himself felt compelled to take, was very considerable, and threatened the peace of the Church. The Bishops themselves were divided upon it—the senior Bishop regarding the resolutions not only as impolitic, but revolutionary, if passed without the concurrence of the Annual Conferences; one of his colleagues admitting their “infringement of the constitution,” but willing to see them go into operation under existing circumstances; and the other, without an open avowal of his opinion as to their constitutional character, evidently favoring their adoption. To secure harmony in the Episcopacy, maintain the authority of the constitution, and, by yielding his preference as to the mode of administering the polity of the Church, obtain a fresh indorsement of the constitution, and thus restore peace without the sacrifice of a vital principle, were certainly his objects. Perhaps the consideration which least influenced him was, that in

proposing and recommending the change, he vindicated his office, as well as his own motives and character, from imputations. These weighty reasons preponderated, and, as we have seen, the "compromise measure" was proposed to the Annual Conferences. Fortunately for the Church, the effort failed; but, by the manner and cause of its failure, the odium of its defeat did not attach to him, nor to those who agreed with him in sentiment. He yielded every thing but principle for peace; but the advocates of the resolutions, while professing to have no wish for any thing more, refused to accept them, unless at what he regarded as the sacrifice of the constitution. And it is ever thus with innovations, both in Church and State. The intelligent and sincere who commence the work are soon pushed aside, or impelled forward to ends they did not contemplate at the beginning, by those less scrupulous and more ambitious. Parties are formed, passions are excited, and the positions gained by concession become the grounds of farther demands. And hence the danger of *beginning to innovate*.

One good effect, however, resulted from the agitation of this subject. The Church was aroused to the study of our system of government, and the great majority of her most intelligent and sincere friends were brought to see and appreciate its nature and scriptural character. The spirit of innovation culminated, among the traveling preachers, at the General Conference of 1820. Its fate was sealed by the discussions and developments which grew

out of the action of this body, and its strength was never afterward so great among the traveling ministry; for although, as we shall see hereafter, it continued for several years to agitate the Church, yet it had received its death-wound, and was slowly but surely dying. And if the question be asked, To whom is the Church most indebted for her preservation from the evils which this change must have occasioned? we answer, To William McKendree and Joshua Soule.

As an illustration of some of the foregoing remarks, and in historical connection with this attempt to modify the government of the Church by diminishing the power of the Episcopacy, we may here advert to a subject which constitutes a very important chapter in the history of American Methodism, and cannot be overlooked in the Life of Bishop McKendree. We mean the question of Lay Representation. In almost every effort which had been made at innovation upon the polity and usages of Methodism, from the days of Mr. O'Kelly, more or less stress had been laid upon the propriety of introducing lay representatives into the Annual and General Conferences. The leaders in all these movements, aware of the general and strong attachment of our countrymen to the principle of civil liberty, and to representation in the law-making department in our political institutions, as a means of preserving our rights, and, ignoring the radical difference between the powers and rights that belong to men as citizens of civil government and such as pertain to them as members of an ec-

clesiastical organization, have always availed themselves of the popular cry for "*equal rights*." Like the cry of persecution, with which it has been often connected, it strikes a chord in the American bosom which, whether proceeding from demagogues or patriots, from oppressed innocence or canting hypocrisy, rarely fails to excite sympathy. And so strong is this tendency, that even in Church-politics, a great many persons, instead of holding their passions in abeyance until they calmly inquire whether the oppression complained of be real or only imaginary, at once take the part of the disaffected against the discipline and usages of the Church. So it has ever been, and so perhaps it will always be; although the history of such agitators among us has proved the truth of the old saying, that "those who are loudest in their complaints against oppression are least disposed to submit to be governed, and most ready to be despotic, when they get the power." Doubtless the effort which the itinerant preachers were making to transfer the selection of Presiding Elders from the Bishops to themselves, enlisted the sympathies of many of the local preachers and laymen of the Church in their behalf, and kindled afresh the almost extinguished spark of disaffection on this question. Some of those among the ministry who favored the change were secretly in favor of a congregational instead of an itinerant system, and naturally sided with the policy to introduce laymen into all the Conferences of the Church; while it is certain that many of the wisest and best of those who advocated the former

change opposed the latter. But, as a general rule, those itinerant preachers opposed to the suspended resolutions were against lay representation, while those of them who favored the latter were also friendly to the former.

Many local preachers and lay members, especially in the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences, became excited upon the subject of their rights and privileges. The spirit of innovation became epidemic, and during the period from 1820 to 1824, and even to 1828, the Church was constantly agitated upon the subject of lay representation. A paper was established at Philadelphia, called the "Wesleyan Repository," to which several popular preachers contributed largely. It soon became clamorous for *reform*, and with increased bitterness discussed the subject, until it seemed determined to change or destroy the government of the Church. Its radicalism alarmed the fears of some who had espoused the cause of the suspended resolutions, and brought them to see that whatever speculative sentiments tend to a disruption of the Church ought to be abandoned for the sake of the Church. The "Repository" was superseded by "The Mutual Rights," published in Baltimore. The contest which ensued was a most unfortunate and mischievous one, and was not quieted for many years—resulting, in 1827, in the secession of many ministers and members, and the formation of "The Methodist Protestant Church." The South and West, having always been the friends of the Church *as it is*, and opposed to sudden and serious

changes in her economy, were less affected by this agitation than the East and North, and consequently suffered in a much smaller degree. One benefit, however, resulting from this controversy was, that the evils of agitation became so palpable that those seeking the passage of the suspended resolutions lost the sympathy of the Church generally—many regarding radicalism as the offshoot of the attempted innovation upon the power of the Episcopacy. And, although this connection was disclaimed by many of the pure-minded and excellent men who originally advocated the election of Presiding Elders, and was opposed most sternly and ably by some of them, yet, however undesigned on the part of such, doubtless this opposition to the existing rules of the Church in reference to Presiding Elders did contribute to the excitement which resulted so disastrously. The moral taught by this part of the history of the Church but repeats the lesson lately suggested—that to innovate upon a well-tried and efficient system of Church-government, in order to carry out speculative views or conform the polity of the Church to that of the State, is a dangerous experiment, since no one can foresee the end of such agitation.*

* The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1866, tendered to her laymen and local preachers a representation in her Annual and General Conferences, without its having been *demanded*, and when no other vexed question was connected with it. But in the case referred to above, this question was associated with others of a most serious character, in-

The excitement growing out of this attempt of the "Reformers" was an additional ingredient in Bishop McKendree's cup of anxiety for the four years succeeding the General Conference of 1820. He seems to have anticipated that the struggle among the preachers would lead to another, in which the laity would imitate them by claiming *their* supposed rights also; and we shall see that his opposition to this measure was such that he would enter into no "compromise."

In resuming the examination of the Journal of Bishop McKendree, we find that he remained in Baltimore, and at Dr. Wilkins's, near the city, for some time after the General Conference of 1820 closed its session. He had been excused from the regular official work, on account of his want of health, and advised to seek its restoration. He was therefore under obligation to take only such exercise as might conduce to this end. Having recovered a little strength, he very soon began to feel restless; and, having been so fortunate as to obtain the Rev. Henry Smith as his traveling companion, they started from Dr. Wilkins's on a tour of preaching and visiting the Churches. The following account is given of that tour from "Recollections of an Old Itinerant," by H. Smith, p. 268:

volving the efficiency, if not the very existence, of Episcopacy and itinerancy. To have yielded then in one instance, would have necessitated other and more damaging concessions, or the quiet of the Church would not have been secured. How this change will affect the Church in the South, remains as yet an unsolved problem. The writer hopes and believes it will work well.

"We visited Churches and families on our way to Frederick City—namely, Ward's, Bennett's, Elliott's, and Gore's, and then A. Warfield's. In every place the Bishop was able to preach, to the edification of the Church, and left a blessing in every neighborhood and family. Thence we went to Liberty, Winstead's, Willis's, and Frederick; thence to Samuel Phillips's; thence to Thomas Key's. . . . The Bishop preached at Charlestown, Brucetown, Thomas Baldwin's, Winchester, Stephensburg, Crum's Meeting-house, the White House, Sharpsburg, and in other places, besides delivering many exhortations in families and private companies. In every place he was received as an angel of God, and his labors were greatly blessed to the people. He made use of the Shannondale and Sulphur Springs' waters, and also those of the Balinda Springs, near Sharpsburg, and gained strength.

"On our return to Baltimore, we attended a camp-meeting on Frederick Circuit. The Bishop's preaching put me in mind of former days, when he went forth in the vigor of his strength, and preached in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. Our visit to Virginia did not only improve the Bishop's health, but was attended with great good to others. We soon returned to Baltimore, and about the last of September left the city for the South. We moved on slowly, visiting the Churches in Washington, Georgetown, Alexandria, Dumfries, Fredericksburg, and many neighborhoods on our way to Williamsburg. From thence we proceeded to Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Sum-

merton, Murfreesboro, and through Tarboro, to Newbern, North Carolina; from thence to Wilmington and Georgetown, and so on, to Charleston, South Carolina, preaching in many country places, as well as in cities and towns.

“We entered Charleston a few days before Christmas, and had summer’s heat. The gardens and every thing looked ‘gay and green’ — green peas in full bloom and fine lettuce in abundance. But before we left there, (about the 1st of January, 1821,) we had heavy frost, and on our way to Columbia, where the South Carolina Conference was to meet, we had snow, rain, sleet, and ice an inch thick. It was disagreeably cold, and great were the sufferings of the people, white as well as colored. The houses were generally open, and the people thinly clad and not prepared for such a change. Some of the oldest people said they had never seen such a winter. There is something very disagreeable in a southern winter’s air.

“In Columbia, South Carolina, we met the Conference. Bishop George presided, and a body of more holy, loving, and zealous ministers of Jesus Christ I never saw. I never saw more strictness observed in the examination of characters in any Conference. Plain, humble, cross-bearing men are its members, as ready *to wait on themselves* as any other Methodist preachers, and remarkably kind and friendly *to servants*.”

From Columbia, South Carolina, the Bishop, with Brother Smith still as his traveling companion, came back to the Virginia Conference, which was

held at Raleigh, North Carolina, on the 28th of February, 1821. Here, leaving the Bishop in the care of Lewis Skidmore, Smith returned to Baltimore, remarking (p. 271) upon this tour: "Perhaps in no part of my life did I serve the Church more faithfully and usefully than while I was helping along our aged and afflicted Superintendent."

The following letter from the Bishop to the Rev. Joshua Soule, is dated Raleigh, North Carolina, February 27, 1821:

MY DEAR BROTHER:—My health, in some good degree, has improved, and I begin to apprehend that not much more improvement is to be expected; and yet such is my remaining debility that I am utterly unable to do the duties of an effective man.

Such is the state of the roads in this country, with the shortness of the time between this Conference and that of Baltimore, that it will be impossible for me to get there in time. Indeed, Bishop George thinks he cannot accomplish the journey in time. Therefore, at the earnest solicitation of Bishop George, I have given up Brother Smith to go on with his horse, that the Bishop may follow on in the stage after Conference. Perhaps we might have found some other way; but the experiment has convinced me that the benefit which the Church would derive from my services, will not justify me in making such a sacrifice of my remaining strength. Hence I have relinquished the idea of pursuing the Conferences any farther for the present.

You have too much sensibility to suppose that this conclusion has been arrived at without some feeling on my part. This is increased by the obligation I brought myself under to attend the New York Conference—if the Lord permit. I have pursued this intention as long as I could see my way clear, and now give it up reluctantly, though with a clear conscience.

From these considerations, I have determined more fully to adopt the advice of the General Conference, as also that of my physicians and friendly counselors, in respect to my course of conduct in order to convalescence.

I believe the Lord called me to the ministry; but I was called to the Superintendency by the General Conference; and by the same authority I am released from the duty and responsibility of that station. Consequently, I feel pretty much at rest while I contemplate what lies before me in my expected course.

The course I took at the last General Conference respecting the suspended resolutions—to lay the subject before the Annual Conferences—must be carried out. I intend to pursue the same course taken by Bishop Asbury and myself when the constitutionality of appointing the Genesee Conference was called in question. I expect to begin at the next Ohio Conference, and so go through the Conferences. I design to lay the subject so before them as to set them completely at liberty, so far as respects me, as to authorize the adoption, and thus put an end to strife, *if this will do it*, and thereby

give additional strength to the constitution, which will guard us against infringements for the future. However, I do not regard the proposed change to be, in reality, any improvement of our system; and I very much doubt if it will operate for the better any length of time. But it is alleged that civil usages are against us, and perhaps it is the best we can bear; and if admitted so as to prevent future injuries, I think the system of government may still be carried into effect—at least so long as we work harmoniously together. And without this the most perfect system could not save us. The Lord's system of government did not continue to please the Israelites, and “he gave them statutes that were not good.”

I have but few confidential associates, nor do I seek more; consequently, I have to stand too much alone in the midst of such momentous affairs. This made the contemplated interview with yourself so much the more important to me. But I learn patiently to submit to disappointments. I desire, dear brother, to hear from you. Please write freely and sentimentally.

I observed, in a letter to Brother Mason, that I consented to your continuing in New York, intending you should understand it before I could write to you.

My respects to Brother Phœbus and inquiring friends. Present my respects to Sister Soule, and remember me at the throne of grace.

Your brother,
To JOSHUA SOULE.

W. MCKENDREE.

The Bishop received the following letter from Joshua Soule, in Baltimore, who, after the General Conference of 1820, having declined the Agency of the Book Concern, was stationed in the city of New York :

New York, Sept. 1, 1820.

DEAR BISHOP :—Your letter of the 14th ult. came to me while at the camp-meeting on Long Island, and I am unable to express the satisfaction it gave me, especially when I learned that, by the blessing of a gracious Providence, your health, which was so precarious when I left you, was improving, with a prospect of its being confirmed.

It is impossible for me to describe the sensations of my mind during the recent session of the General Conference, when I saw your feeble state, your emaciated frame, your strength prostrated, and your debilitated condition, like a reed shaken by the wind. I feared, not for *you*, but for the Church of God committed to your charge. I strove in vain to free myself from the painful apprehension that, in all human probability, your superintendence of the great work was near its close at the very time that the state of the Church, both in the ministry and membership, was such as to require the continuance of your oversight. My chief source of consolation, during this conflict, was a *firm persuasion* of the wisdom and rectitude of the divine counsels, and of the unerring superintendence of the providence of God. To the events of this providence, however dark and unscrutable to the comprehension of limited agency, I desire to bow with

humble submission, and walk by faith when sight is not permitted to guide me. But as it has been a matter of prayer with me that the great Head of the Church would raise you up and preserve you as a light and shield to our Zion, so shall the answer of it be a subject of thanksgiving and praise.

With reference to my conduct at the last General Conference, although it was not dictated by passion, but was the result of the most calm and deliberate reflection of which I was capable, under the circumstances, the time which has elapsed since that memorable period has afforded me the opportunity of reviewing that whole matter with sober deliberation; and after the most careful, and, I trust, the most impartial investigation, I feel a satisfaction in my own mind in recurring to the measures I then pursued, for the absence of which no earthly emolument could be a consideration.

I firmly believed at the time, and have perceived no evidence to change my opinion, that the resolution of the General Conference, by which the Presiding Elders were made elective by the Annual Conferences, was a violation of the constitution, and a radical change of the government of the Church. With this conviction I might have gone *silently*, and perhaps without opposition, to the altar of consecration. But how should I have stood in the judgment of my own mind? or how should I be able to answer for this *silence* to that great religious body to which the voice of the Conference had placed me in the most responsible relation? I think, considering the nature, continuance, and ex-

tent of the controversy, he must have been a superficial observer of human nature who should suppose that the subject would rest simply on the provisions of that resolution. It was sufficient for the time being that the *principle* was ceded, and the foundation laid for the perfecting of the contemplated building. The best defense which could be made at any future period would be weak and ineffectual after such an obvious relinquishment of the grand principle upon which our ecclesiastical polity rests. Under this view of the subject, had I entered upon the duties of a General Superintendent with submission, I should have felt myself bound to give a reason for my conduct to hundreds of thousands who are already in the fellowship of the Church, and who have subscribed to our form of Episcopacy. This was a responsibility which I was conscious I could not sustain. Since the General Conference I have frequently thought that, under the extraordinary circumstances in which I was placed, I may have spoken or acted with apparent disrespect to you or Bishops George and Roberts, or to the Conference. Should you or they have marked any thing of this kind, I deeply regret it, and can give assurance that no irreverence was designed. And, under the necessity of differing in opinion, I wished to express that difference in as respectful language as I could, consistently with that frankness which I have ever valued as one of the brightest ornaments of the human character.

I had reason to expect that, on my return to this section of the work, my situation would not be very

pleasant. But the most profound silence has prevailed with respect to the business of the Conference; and I am treated with much greater apparent respect than before.

As I was not able to control my temporal circumstances without a sacrifice which I was unable to bear, and, at the same time, receiving a letter from Brother Roszel, in which he expressed an opinion that, all things considered, it might be as well for me to remain here for the present year, I received an appointment in the city. At the same time I received instructions from Bishop George to remove to the Baltimore Conference at its next session.

This is my inclination and desire. But I wish it to be explicitly understood that I hold myself in perfect readiness to move to *any part* of the work where it shall be judged most expedient. I have resigned all ideas of a local nature. House and home affect me no more; and I have cause to praise God that, after a long and painful struggle, my dear companion is fully with me in this view. I owe no man any thing, and though poor, I have enough. I covet no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; but prove, by happy experience, that "godliness with contentment is great gain."

You will doubtless see Bishop George in Baltimore or its vicinity, and receive from him a narrative of the disastrous events which have transpired in this station—suffice it to say that several hundreds have separated themselves from the fellowship of our Church, established an independent congregation, and embodied under a system of gov-

ernment which secures a perfect equality of rights and powers to every member, male and female—properly speaking, an ecclesiastical democracy, in the most extensive sense of the word.*

The poor deluded Africans, both in the city and in Brooklyn, have declared themselves independent of us, and are, it is to be feared, approaching a state of the wildest disorder and of ruin. Deeply involved in debt, and without the means of extricating themselves, their churches mortgaged for security, and the periods of payment approaching, their situation is truly lamentable. While they were subject to us, there was a disposition in the public mind to aid them; but convinced that they are incapable of governing themselves, and consequently that assistance would be thrown away were it given in their present state, that disposition has subsided.

Various have been the ostensible causes which have led to these unhappy effects. But there is a real cause which is unperceived, or if perceived, is unacknowledged. I think, soon after my appointment to the charge of the Book Concern, I communicated to you my persuasion that serious and very unpleasant events awaited us in this city. Whether the grounds on which this persuasion rested were assigned, I do not recollect. I was then the silent and unofficial observer of men and measures, and I clearly saw that the seed was sown,

* This is doubtless an allusion to the secession of a preacher—James M. Stillwell—and about three hundred members of the Church in the city of New York.

and had taken such deep root as to warrant the expectation of a copious harvest.

I frequently heard the cry of "*Popery*," "*Ecclésiastical tyranny*," "*Unlimited power*," "*Oppression*," etc., from those who had promised to "act as sons in the gospel," and with some of those who had sounded the alarm there was too strong an appearance of the existence of what they would be thought so much to oppose. To this cry there was a responsive action in the official department of the Church; and so powerful was the sentiment of "*equality*" and "*independence*," that it was extremely difficult, not to say impossible, for the proper officer to keep the official body, when met for business, subject to the common rules of order. Through the official members this strange fire was kindled in the classes. The consequence was, that the ministry was not only treated with disrespect, but with contempt. To be charged unblushingly with deceit, hypocrisy, and falsehood, became the order of the day. At length it comes to issue on a plain and unequivocal point of discipline. The question is, Shall it be carried into effect? A number of the influential official characters say it shall not. The preacher in charge says it shall at all hazards. It is a point which admits of no modification; and the official men in opposition immediately resign their office and withdraw from the Church. The explosion is tremendous—many leaders follow the example, and carry their classes with them.

Admitting this to be the true state of the case, you will perceive how difficult it is either to pre-

vent or cure the evil. The fatal source of it is *deep* and *wide*. Happy would I be if I could believe it would stop in this city, but the deadly principle is too extensively diffused. You will also perceive how critically I am situated, entertaining these views of the origin and progress of this schism. Pray for me, that I may be guided by that "wisdom which is from above." O how ardently I could wish that you could visit us and aid us by your counsel and your influence!

With reference to the acts of the General Conference in relation to local preachers, my situation, at the time of the passage of the rule, was such as to prevent me from analyzing it in that way its importance required. I have since given it a careful investigation, the result of which is, that it is attended with several serious difficulties, which I must make the subject of another communication. But I need not suggest to you how important it is that the greatest prudence be observed in all communications on this subject. We have reached an eventful epoch in our history. May the great Head of the Church preserve us in the unity of the apostolic faith, and in the harmony and simplicity of the gospel order of discipline!

Yours, most affectionately,

JOSHUA SOULE.

A few days after the foregoing letter was written, the following communication was dispatched. As it explains its object, and illustrates the character of the Bishop by the influence which it was thought

he only could exert over the disaffected portion of the Methodists in New York, we insert it :

New York, Sept. 7, 1820.

DEAR BISHOP:—At a meeting of the stationed preachers in this city, together with the Presiding Elder of the District, yesterday, I was requested to write to you immediately, requesting you, if possible, to visit this station without delay. It is believed by the preachers that your presence and counsel at this crisis of affairs here might be of essential benefit to the Church. The principal actors in the late separation, while they appear to have lost all confidence in the men placed in charge, manifest the most implicit confidence in you; and some of them have expressed a desire for you to come, and have inquired after you with apparent solicitude, saying if you had been here, things would have been otherwise.

For myself, I have no expectation that your influence would bring back to the Church any considerable number of those who have departed from us; yet I am fully persuaded that a visit from you might be of great use under the present circumstances. The grounds of this persuasion are of such a character as to render it difficult to communicate by letter. Let nothing of a pecuniary kind prevent you from visiting us. I pledge myself for the reimbursement of your expenses. I would have been in Baltimore to present the case to you, and attend you to this place, but for the imperious call for my services in this city.

You will please to give me an answer immediately on receiving this; and, if it is possible for you to visit us, let me know the probable time when we may expect your arrival; otherwise, let me know where I may meet you by mail from this time until the South Carolina Conference.

Yours, with esteem and respect,

JOSHUA SOULE.

We cannot deny ourselves and our readers the gratification of inserting the following very interesting letter. The writer was then the stationed preacher in the city of Savannah, which was visited by that most fearful pestilence, the yellow fever. Multitudes had died, and thousands had fled the city; but our beloved brother had braved the danger, and, with his family, stayed in his charge, and faithfully and alone ministered to the religious wants of the stricken city. In this season of peril and affliction, the Bishop had assured him by letter of his sympathy, and encouraged him to duty by promising to remember him in prayer. Those who may have been similarly situated can appreciate the feelings of the writer—a man who never deserted the post of danger, and whose triumphant death in the midst of arduous duty has afforded a suitable *finale* to such a life:

Savannah, October 31, 1820.

VERY DEAR AND REVEREND SIR:—Your most kind letter was as dew to the parched grass. Brother Hall, of Norfolk, had before given me the long-

wished-for intelligence of your better health, and intimated its being probable that you would attend our Conference. That you had purposed to do so, I was not uninformed, but I greatly feared your want of health.

I do most heartily join you, my dear father, in blessing and praising God for all his mercies to you and the Church; and surely, you have my humble prayers that you may more and more prevail against all evil, and live to the edification and comfort of the Church.

I cannot tell you with how lively a feeling of love and thankfulness I read the expression of your good wishes for me—how sincerely I thank you for praying for me. Well, it is even as you desired. The dreary, heartless scenes of woe upon woe, disease, and death, and desolation, are passing or passed away, and I still live. My wife still lives, my children and my servants—all are alive, and in health. We have had no death nor sickness in our family through all this sickening, dying time. Blessed be the Lord God, who hath kept us for his word's sake, and that none may be discouraged when sent to serve the Church in this valley of the shadow of death!

I am unable to give you any thing like an account of the state of the Church in this place. For nearly two months we have had (strictly) no Church—no sacrament, no love-feast, no class-meeting. Our people have been scattered abroad, wherever they could find a retreat from the desolating sickness of the city. I might almost say, I was left alone.

But hope anticipates a brighter day at hand. O that God may return with the people, and fill us with salvation!

I said we have had no Church—no class-meetings. We have had nothing that is peculiarly ours; and perhaps my situation, for the last six or seven weeks, has been as novel as it has been difficult and delicate.

When the character and prevalence of our death-bearing disease had so alarmed the city as to drive *six-sevenths* of its entire white population from their homes, our people fled with the rest; and I had not remaining steward, nor leader, nor as many members as would form a class. Our Church was situated in the most fatal and the most deserted part of the city, and remote from the remaining inhabitants generally. I was solicited to remove preaching to the new Presbyterian Church, which was recommended from its being in a central and more healthful part of the city. And this was farther urged because the remnants of the Baptist and Presbyterian congregations, as well as the few remaining ones of my own, were all looking to me for the services of the ministry. It was also proposed that the pews should be made free, and that collections should be made upon the same plan and for the same uses as in the Methodist Church. Under these circumstances, and for the *present distress only*, I consented. As far as I can yet judge, the measure has had a good effect. On next Sabbath, I return to our Church.

I hope the state of religion in our Conference

generally is better than the last year. Accounts are good from the upper parts of this State. Columbia lives, and Camden is all alive. Poor Savannah! We trust in the Lord that we shall be saved from dying. Charleston is as formerly: little increase, but no declension of the Church. A local preacher, by the name of Triggs, has been laboring on the south of the Altamaha River, just above the Satilla Circuit. He tells me that he has formed a two-weeks' circuit, and has joined fifty in Society. They wish a circuit-preacher. Triggs has been employed in this good work constantly since the month of May. He represents the people as being very destitute, and the face of the country as being better than within the Satilla Circuit.

With the sincerest reverence and affection, your dutiful son,

W. CAPERS.

P. S. Please give my love to the brethren, Hall and Smith.

W. C.

It was about this period that the attention of the Bishop was turned with great interest to the condition of the Indian tribes within the United States. But the newly-organized Missionary Society was not able to supply the funds necessary to carry forward his plan. He aroused the preachers to the importance of the enterprise, planned and advocated the system of general and systematic contributions for missionary operations, and may be justly regarded as the father of the missionary financial plan which has already done so much, and promises to do vastly more for the conversion of the children

of the forest, as well as for other fields of missionary effort. It was during the early part of the year 1822, that he resolved to send a missionary to the Cherokee Indians, and the writer, at the Bishop's request, had consented to undertake the task. But the state of his health and the remonstrances of his charge, which was likely to be left destitute of a preacher the remainder of the year, induced the Bishop to decline sending him. Not long afterward, however, in 1823, he found others whom he appointed to that Nation, and whose success was wonderful.

Having resolved upon attempting to Christianize the Indians, Dr. Capers was selected and appointed missionary to South Carolina Conference and to the Indians in 1821, with instructions to visit the Choc-taws should the Creeks refuse to receive missionaries.

Of course this devoted servant of the Church did not hesitate to enter promptly upon the duty assigned him. Brought up in affluence, accustomed to the refinements of a city life, and highly cultivated in mind and manners, he had cast his lot with the Methodists at a period in the history of the Church in South Carolina when it greatly needed his personal and family influence. His position in society, his learning, talents, and zeal, were fully and most efficiently devoted to the cause of Methodism. A train of unfortunate events had transpired in Charleston tending to divide the Church and degrade her ministry in popular estimation. The wealthy and intelligent portion of the community looked down upon the Methodist preachers with mingled feelings of suspicion and contempt. It

remained for Dr. Capers to correct this state of public sentiment, and by his purity, zeal, and eloquence to elevate both the character of the Church and the ministry. Born near Charleston, in 1790, of a family respected and honored by the whole community; a graduate of the State College, and of unquestionable personal integrity, God seems to have raised him up for the defense and propagation of Methodism in that proud and chivalrous section of the country. In addition to all his other advantages, he happily blended the most bland and prepossessing manners with a simple Christian gravity and unstudied dignity; and, superadded to all, the attractions of extraordinary eloquence. That eloquence was not the timid and superficial counterfeit which too often passes for the genuine, but combined all the elements of true evangelical eloquence. It was instructive, persuasive, pungent, powerful; full of argument and illustration, earnest, searching, and replete with the demonstration of the Holy Ghost and with power. It was impossible to form his acquaintance without being struck with his manners, or to hear him without feeling an attraction. The Church loved him as much for his humility and unselfishness as she admired his talents and success; and thousands of ears which heretofore had been closed by pride or prejudice to Methodist preaching, listened with rapture and reverence to the sweet and persuasive tones of his musical voice.

The following interesting communication was addressed by Dr. Capers to Bishop McKendree:

22*

Lodebar, Aug. 14, 1821.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:—Just a week ago I returned from an excursion into Georgia, in which I visited Augusta, Wrightsboro, Greensboro, Salem, Athens, Lexington, Elberton, and Washington, besides Camden, Columbia, and Edgefield Courthouse, in this State.

On this tour I was occupied forty days, and obtained \$600 for the mission. The whole amount now collected stands at about \$2,800.

To-morrow I set out for the Creeks. As far as at present I can be determined, this visit will be confined to the Creeks, and is intended to ascertain whether they will receive us or not; and if they receive us, to select and secure a site, and engage for occupying it without delay. This done, I purpose to return to them with a missionary—perhaps Brother Hill; or, if they will not admit us among them, he will accompany me to the Choctaws. Whether, in the event of a favorable reception among the Creeks, I ought to seek more than one infant mission among them, or whether, having planted one grain of seed in that field, I should go on to the Choctaws, remains yet to be determined. In either case, I must prefer the gospel's own way of disseminating itself. Two men, or a half-dozen men, or men with their wives, or a helper each—not huddled together at the outset, but placed at different points—may grow into so many enlarged missions, with branches detached through the intermediate country so as to cover the whole.

I now purpose to go directly to the Agent for the

Creek Nation, (Col. Crowell,) and having delivered a letter from the Secretary of War, (Mr. J. C. Calhoun,) will concert with the Agent and such other persons as I may approve the best introduction to the Indians. At Milledgeville I hope to meet with Col. Richard A. Blount, and will probably obtain an interview with Gen. Mitchell, lately the Agent.

I have not been unmindful that, with the Creek Indians especially, it is of importance to distinguish between the charity of the Church and the policy of the government. In this work, both seek the same object; but the Indians may be less suspicious of the one than the other.

While in Georgia, I was careful to be informed who, of the more distinguished citizens of that State not immediately connected with the government, are known to advantage among the Indians, and sought the countenance of such for our mission. I now have a letter from Gen. McIntosh to the Indian chief of that name, and, when at Milledgeville, expect to receive letters from Gen. Mitchell and Gen. Merriwether. Perhaps there are none of our countrymen who can better serve us than these gentlemen.

Is it not a pity that I have not a letter from the Bishop or the Bishops and Conference to the chiefs and council of the Nation, setting forth our objects, and the motives that induce us to it, and soliciting them to talk with me as their brother and the agent of the Church? I am not sanguine of success among this tribe, but in case of a failure, I would not have it chargeable to any omission on our part.

But I am sorry to say, I make poor work in enlisting missionaries. Brother Christian G. Hill is the only preacher upon whom I can depend, willing to enter upon the holy, blessed service. If I go to the Choctaws, I must make large calculations on Brother Hersey. Indeed, as moderate as have been my collections, I fear the want of men, more than of money, will give limits to our work.

You shall hear from me as soon as any thing shall have transpired between us and the Creeks. I know you always pray for the blessing and direction of God in this great business. I have no confidence but in his providence. As for myself, I feel every way assured of an unfitness, not to say inadequacy, to its accomplishment. I feel much, I fear much; and I should set out despairing, but that I hope for help from the Almighty, and succor from his Spirit. Your son in the gospel, W. CAPERS.

Dr. Capers succeeded in procuring two sites for missions in the Creek Nation—Asbury and McKendree—to which preachers were regularly appointed at the ensuing Conference. In a year or two, however, the name of McKendree was dropped from the Minutes, although Asbury Mission continued to be filled with missionaries until the Indians determined to emigrate to the West. Dr. Capers was also the Superintendent of this work for three years, although filling the station of Milledgeville a part of the time.

We have now arrived at an important era in the history of Methodism, as well as in the life of

Bishop McKendree—the era which dates the beginning of a more systematic and vigorous effort to extend the blessings of the gospel, by missionary operations, to the Indians, and to the colored people both in America and Africa—enterprises with which Bishop McKendree deeply sympathized, and to which, by his wise and far-seeing counsels, as well as by his official and personal influence, he greatly contributed.

Among the appointees to the Cherokee Missions, at different times, were Andrew Jackson Crawford, William McMahon, Francis A. Owen, Dickson C. McLeod, John B. McFerrin and his brother William, A. L. P. Green, J. W. Hanner, Greenberry Garrett, James J. Trott, and others. Various schools and circuits were organized. Revivals occurred in different places, and an increase of over six hundred members was reported in a single year. The Tennessee Conference furnished the missionaries to this tribe.

Similar scenes took place in the Choctaw Missions, and Alexander Talley, of the Mississippi Conference, published an account of a most glorious work of grace in that Nation. Nor were these revivals temporary in their effects upon these aboriginal tribes; for long subsequent to their removal across the Mississippi River, and down to the present time, these large tribes have retained their Christian character and Church-organization. The writer has repeatedly visited the Wyandotts, Delawares, Shawnees, Chickasaws, Kickapoos, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creeks, held Conferences for them,

